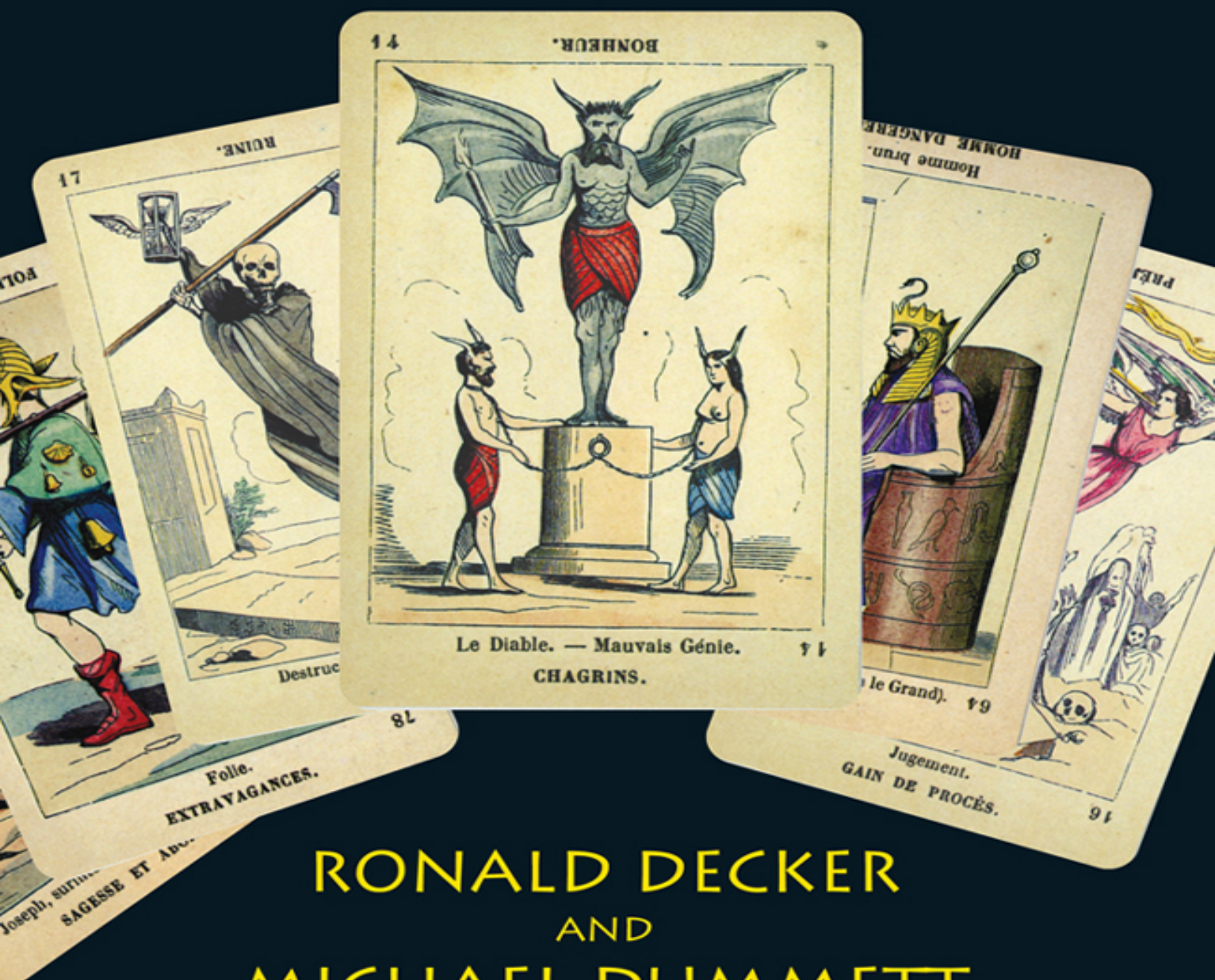


A HISTORY OF THE OCCULT TAROT



RONALD DECKER
AND
MICHAEL DUMMETT

DUCKWORTH
OVERLOOK

A History of the Occult Tarot

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1870-1970

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and
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Duckworth Overlook

This eBook edition 2013
This edition first published in the UK and US in 2013
First published in 2002 by
Duckworth Overlook

LONDON
30 Calvin Street, London E1 6NW
T: 020 7490 7300
E: info@duckworth-publishers.co.uk
www.ducknet.co.uk

NEW YORK
141 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10012
www.overlookpress.com

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A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBNs
Paperback: 978-0-7156-4572-7
Kindle: 978-0-7156-4704-2
ePub: 978-0-7156-4705-9
Library PDF: 978-0-7156-4706-6

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Foreword

A scholarly book on Tarotism was conceived by Michael Dummett and Donald Laycock, an Australian anthropologist to whose memory this book is dedicated. Sadly, at the very beginning of 1989, his intended co-author learned that Laycock had contracted a form of leukaemia and could no longer work; his death followed very soon after. The project seemed in danger of dying with the Australian author. However, it was revived through collaboration with Ronald Decker and Thierry Depaulis. The material amassed by the three of us became so sizeable that it compelled a division of the one-volume project into two. We published in 1996, under the title *A Wicked Pack of Cards*, a study of the esoteric uses of Tarots in France from the first evidence up to the early XX century. We described the major packs, both esoteric and divinatory, published in the period under discussion. We provided biographical data on the major theorists; we explained their innovative thoughts, their unacknowledged sources and their programmes of symbolism. We indicated certain misconceptions and misrepresentations.

Some of our readers complained that our book was not the one they really wanted to see written. They would have preferred that we had written as metaphysicians, semioticians, mythographers or iconographers. These perspectives could yield valuable views of the esoteric Tarot, but they cannot receive proper delineation in one book. We had noted that Tarotism lacked a simple, honest, thorough chronicle. That is the book that we intended to provide.

The earliest evidence of the Tarot comes from the courtly circles of northern Italy in the 1440s. The pack probably was invented there in the 1420s. Its only indicated use was for playing a card game. The Tarot in its original form included four suits, of Swords, Batons, Cups and Coins, each suit being composed of ten numeral cards from Ace to 10 and four court cards – Jack, Knight, Queen and King. The four suits were the ordinary ones then used in Italy, and still used in many parts of it, for regular

playing cards; the Knight was a standard court figure in Italian packs, the Queen being added for the Tarot. The unique feature of the pack is the presence of 21 picture cards properly called 'trumps', and a single card called the Fool. The trumps form a sequence, very often numbered from I (low) to XXI (high). They represent stock figures such as the Pope, Justice, Death and the Sun. The subjects depicted were originally everywhere the same, but their order and numbering differed markedly in different regions of Italy. It was the addition of the Fool and the trumps that essentially constituted the invention of the Tarot pack. The first Tarot games diversified into a large family of them, still played in parts of Italy, France, Switzerland, Denmark, the Black Forest, Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, and formerly in every country of Europe save Britain, the Iberian peninsula and the former Ottoman Empire. These are all trick-taking games; everywhere but in France and Sicily, the original practice was maintained of ranking the numeral cards differently in different suits. In all four suits the four court cards ranked highest; in Swords and Batons (Spades and Clubs) the cards then ranked 10, 9, ..., 2, Ace, but in the other two suits in the reverse order, Ace, 2, ..., 9, 10. In France and Sicily, the numeral cards had a uniform order, from 10 downwards, in all four suits.

A little before 1750, players of Tarot games in Germany radically changed the pack's appearance. They left intact its structure and the rules of the game, but adopted the familiar French suit-signs of Spades, Clubs, Hearts and Diamonds in place of the Italian ones. The traditional figures were dropped from the trump cards; these were henceforth distinguished primarily by the inscribed numerals. The imagery now was of animals, genre scenes or other arbitrary designs. By the end of the XVIII century these French-suited Tarots had, for purposes of play, replaced the Italian-suited ones everywhere save in France, Switzerland and Italy. French players went over to using them around the beginning of the XX century.

Modern cartomancy arose only in the XVIII century: packs of cards were shuffled, dealt and spread in prescribed formats for telling the future. The earliest instance of Tarot cartomancy occurred in Bologna, but the familiar variety, surviving today, descends from French fortune-tellers. First, they assigned divinatory meanings to the cards of the common Piquet pack, which had French suit-signs. Jean-Baptiste Alliette (1738-91), a Parisian diviner better known as Etteilla, transferred his Piquet

cartomancy to the Tarot. By this time the game of Tarot had ceased to be played in France outside its eastern region so, to Parisian seers, the Tarot seemed mysterious and exotic. Etteilla and others infused the Tarot with occult sciences. This resulted in the production of new Tarots, to be used for common fortune-telling, yet designed to express some cosmic theme. Here were the beginnings of the trend nowadays called Tarotism.

The French Tarotists of the XVIII and XIX centuries identified as the traditional Tarot the version used in France, known as the Tarot de Marseille and derived from a Milanese prototype. They took the order and numbering of the trumps found in it to be *the* Tarot order and numbering, being unaware of the other orders, ancient and current; they were equally unaware of the different rankings in the different suits observed almost everywhere but in France. These oversights were inherited by Tarotists in other lands.

Some Tarotists belonged to secret societies, claimants to ancient wisdom; but when they published about the Tarot, they did not necessarily claim to derive their knowledge from arcane instruction. More often, each was proud to advertise his insight as highly intuitive. However, their theories of the Tarot's genesis placed it among secretive types, such as Egyptian priests, magicians, alchemists, Cabalists and Templars. In the most prevalent interpretation of the Tarot trumps, they were forced into alignment with the Hebrew alphabet, so that the Tarot could be interpreted in terms of 'Christian Cabalism'. The Cabala was likewise said to be interpretable only in the light of the Tarot. By this means, a pack of playing cards was integrated into a whole system of Western magical theory. The originator of this idea was Éliphas Lévi (1810-75), the first modern synthesiser of Western occultism.

In the second half of the XIX century, the influence of the French Tarotists reached England and the United States. Both countries were seeing an upsurge in a wide variety of clubs and fraternities, including secret societies with occult curricula. The most influential Tarotists were those in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The founders synthesised a wide range of Western magic and designed a Tarot that reflected this comprehensive approach. English-speaking occultists subjected the Tarot to a fairly uniform treatment: they assimilated the old French theories of the Tarot, then adapted them and declared the novel

result to be a ‘secret tradition’, which they purveyed within their magical societies.

In the present book, we have chosen to concentrate on the life of that ‘secret tradition’ of the Tarot as it was engendered within the occult societies and as it escaped their control to take up new careers in modern culture. The secrets have become generally available, disclosed through publications by disaffected initiates. Such initiates tended to form their own groups, which maintained and expanded the publications about the Tarot. A complete survey has entailed an understanding of occult philosophy among the ancients (see our Introduction) and of the occultist movement, especially in the XIX century (see Part I). We have carefully investigated the activities of the outstanding fraternities and the lives of certain members. Some of the esoteric societies in our survey still exist and still use the Tarot – the story continues. But the phase involving secret teachings has surely run its course. Occultists themselves have become more open and less worried about the popularisation of their ideas. Besides, ideas can scarcely be hidden in a global community that has grown ever more egalitarian and communicative. The last Tarot ‘secrets’ were well on their way to becoming common knowledge when the ‘counter-culture’ appropriated the Tarot in the 1960s. This book tells many stories, and they do not end simultaneously; but we have tried to conclude the survey at about 1970.

Even the most scholarly efforts have failed to supply the Tarot with an interpretation that is acceptable to art historians and historians of playing cards. We do not deny the likelihood that some Renaissance allegories underlie the selection of trump images. We did not write *A Wicked Pack of Cards* in order to attack all arcane interpretations of the Tarot, as some critics supposed. On the contrary, we initially intended to include chapters advancing a theory about the esoteric significance attached to the trump sequence by its original inventor. However, the accumulation of French theories proved sufficient for an ample book, and we omitted any comprehensive interpretation of our own. We have encountered a similar abundance of Tarot theories in the English-speaking world; we have again curtailed our own hypotheses of trump symbolism in favour of greater attention to those of importance in our chronicle.

As in *A Wicked Pack of Cards*, we seek to show that various of the recounted theories are baseless and anachronistic: they usually assume far

too great an antiquity for the Tarot, and tend to interpret it according to pagan and/or Jewish doctrines that Italians of the early XV century could not have known. Some occultists, when responding to our earlier book, abused us for using rational arguments; but the constructive critic would do better to meet us on our own ground and use rational argument to prove us wrong. Perhaps the truth of the matter lies in a speculation expressed in private correspondence by Gareth Knight, that 'any association of stock images from the general cultural store' would work as well as does the Tarot for imaginative endeavour of an esoteric nature: the mind may project other structures upon it. If this is so, it need not matter to Tarotists whether or not a hidden meaning originally underlay the Tarot: it will serve their purposes equally well in either case.

Acknowledgements

We owe special thanks to Robert Gilbert, who kept in close touch with us throughout the writing of this book, and was unfailingly helpful, giving us much new and important information of which we had no previous idea and kindly supplying us with photocopies of quantities of material; this book owes a very great deal to his generous help. We fondly remember Eden Gray: she was more than hospitable to the strangers who wished to tell her story in this book. We are grateful also to Robert Word: with amazing accuracy and powers of recall, he provided details about diverse esoterists and suggested several productive lines of investigation. Yet further thanks are due to Marjorie Behrman, Rev. Ruth Blighton, Thierry Depaulis, Linda Falorio, Kenneth Grant, Mary K. Greer, Dr Stephan Hoeller, Professor Moshe Idel, K. Frank Jensen, Stuart R. Kaplan, Gareth Knight, Professor Phillip Lucas, Dr Rafal T. Prinke, Susan C. Roberts and Dr Dorothy Wissler.

References

The full bibliographical reference to a book or article referred to or cited only once in our footnotes is given in the footnote in question. Works mentioned more than once are cited, in footnotes and sometimes in text, by means of the author's name followed by the year of publication. When two publications by the same author appeared in the same year, they are distinguished by a letter added to the year. The complete bibliographical

references, with translations of titles if not in English, are given in the final Bibliography, where they are listed in alphabetical order of the abbreviations used to refer to them earlier.

PART I

OCCIDENTAL OCCULTISM

CHAPTER 0

Introduction

Ancient texts, especially those on magic and mysticism, sometimes misrepresent their age, authorship and sources. This practice was not necessarily deceitful, for it could well constitute ‘pious fraud’: when an author suppressed his true identity, he was exercising humility; when he advertised venerable origins for his work, he was extolling the ideas of his predecessors, real or imagined. Plato's written dialogues purported to relay oral teachings by Socrates. Biblical figures, notably Patriarchs and Apostles, were given credit for an abundance of wise and visionary writings, long preserved but never accepted as canonical. In Egypt, a vast literature on religion, magic and technical knowledge was traced to the god Thoth. The ‘Books of Thoth’ of course were produced by human scribes, presumably at the behest of priests. But those men genuinely felt that they were conduits serving their god: through them, his ideas found expression.

The cult of Thoth

Thoth was particularly revered among Egyptian priests and scribes, for he was regarded as the inventor of writing and the revealer of spiritual truths. Historically he began as a minor god identified with the moon. As such, he was secretary to the Sun, personified as the god Re (Ra). Thoth became the patron of writing – including messages, hymns, holy books, magical charms, medical recipes, computations and building plans. Mathematics and measurements perhaps related to his role as a lunar god, since the moon's phases were used to calculate time. Certainly the Egyptian priests were concerned with the changing seasons, the calendar and its holy days. Thoth's name was given to the first month in the Egyptian calendar.

Thoth was pictured as attending the judgement of the dead and recording their destinies in the afterlife. He sometimes appears as a man; his human body more often has the head of an ibis. The ibis was sacred to Thoth, as

was the cynocephalous ape. Sculptures of apes still guard the site of the temple of Thoth at Kemunu (modern El Eshmunein) in central Egypt, for centuries a major centre of his cult.

After Alexander the Great invaded Egypt and began its Hellenisation, Kemunu became widely known also as Hermopolis ('City of Hermes'). Another Hermopolis was situated in the Nile delta. The references to Hermes, a Greek god, arise from his roles as guide of souls and divine messenger, similar to Thoth. By the time of the Greek occupation, Thoth had evolved into a personification of intelligence and order. He and his consort Maat presided over social and cosmic harmony.

Hermetism

Greek influence caused Thoth to be assimilated to Hermes, and it tended to humanise the god. Now he had supposedly been born in forgotten times and was one of the world's first sages. He attained wisdom so great that he became a god in legend or in fact: he was called Hermes Trismegistus, meaning 'Hermes the Thrice Greatest', a title adapted from the Egyptians' practice of addressing gods as 'great, great, great'. He purportedly wrote many dialogues and discourses, collectively known as the Books of Hermes. They were thought to have been written in Egyptian hieroglyphics, only later converted to Greek. The surviving examples are a blend of Hellenistic philosophy and Egyptian religion. As such, they cannot have originated in prehistory. Hermetic philosophy combined Middle Platonism, Stoicism and Neo-Pythagoreanism, an amalgam that could have occurred no earlier than 100 BC.¹ The religious content of Hermetism, in modern terms, can be categorised as magical, astrological and alchemical; but these distinctions would have been unfamiliar to the Egyptian priests. Their 'occult' interests were simply the standard curriculum in the cult of Thoth.² The earliest Hermetica probably embraced all the literature of Thoth that could be dressed in the philosophical ideas imported from Greece. The most likely Hermetists would have been Egyptian Greeks who were drawn to the native religion but who absorbed it through Greek concepts, explained in the Greek language.

Much Hermetic literature has doubtless disappeared; the surviving texts have been filtered through Christian and Muslim editors with various interests. The famous *Corpus Hermeticum* is an anthology consisting of

more than a dozen treatises by different authors, not always in agreement. The *Corpus* as we have it was probably compiled or edited by Byzantine scholars. They would have concentrated on spirituality and may have ignored or deleted both magical and materialistic topics. The *Corpus* dates from the II and III centuries ad and was unknown to Western Europe in the Middle Ages. In about 1460 an Italian monk, travelling in Macedonia, acquired a copy of the manuscript and conveyed it to Florentine humanists. Cosimo de' Medici, the ruler of Florence, urgently directed Marsilio Ficino to translate the manuscript into Latin. The scholar set aside his pending translations of the works of Plato; Hermes was favoured because the belief still prevailed that he came before Plato, in time and in importance. In 1471 Ficino published his translation of the *Corpus*, which he called *Pimander*, a title that properly belongs only to the first treatise.

Hermetism greatly contributed to the Renaissance effort to reconstruct the *prisca theologia*, the pure religion believed to have existed in some primordial era, before the emergence of regional and doctrinal differences. Other elements in this theosophical synthesis were the Chaldean Oracles and the Orphic Hymns. The former were piously attributed to Zoroaster, the latter to Orpheus, accepted as a historical 'theologian'. The Humanists and Neoplatonists had indeed found evidence of a mutual source for their exotic ideas – but they had never been part of an organised religion dating from time immemorial; they had merged in the loose syncretism of the early Roman Empire.

A succession of distinguished scholars continued to refine and enlarge the Hermetic Corpus. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples published an extensive commentary in 1494. To this, in an edition of 1505, he added the *Asclepius*. That discourse, an early translation from Greek to Latin, had been the only complete example of philosophical Hermetism available in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. The *Asclepius* is of special interest to esoterists, for within its discussion of spiritual values is a passage about the Egyptian priests' ability to create magical statues. In 1554 Adrien Turnebus published the first Greek edition of the *Corpus*, to which he added a few Hermetic pieces found in an anthology by the Greek moralist Joannes Stobaeus (fl. AD 500). Subsequent scholars detected Hermetism in some 30 passages from Stobaeus. Meanwhile, the *Corpus* was translated into vernacular languages across Europe.

The exaggerated age and influence of the *Corpus Hermeticum* went undisputed until its scrutiny by Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614). He applied the latest techniques of textual analysis, and, in his *De rebus sacris et ecclesiasticis exercitationes XVI* (*Sixteen Exercises on Sacred and Ecclesiastical Matters*, London, 1614), correctly concluded that the *Corpus* was a composite work that originated no earlier than the I century ad. The history of Hermetism needed to be rewritten, but Hermetists themselves managed to ignore Casaubon's critique.

The typical Hermetist had no interest in the history of Hermetism nor, indeed, in its underlying philosophy. He was concerned instead with the technical magic attributed to Hermes. The techniques are preserved in an abundance of manuscripts. Astrology, alchemy and magic are respectively represented by the *Liber Hermetis* (*Book of Hermes*), the *Tabula Smaragdina* (*Emerald Tablet or Table*) and *Picatrix* (translated from the Arabic *Goal of Sages*). All three are available in print today.³ But most of the esoteric texts are unpublished, and the field is beyond our current scope.⁴ It will suffice to explain the concepts that underlie these texts, so bewildering to the modern mind.

Hermetic theory can be seen to rely on mystical Platonism but also on Egyptian magic and, to a lesser extent, the Hebrew Scriptures. God and matter are eternal. Matter is not to be despised; yet God deserves the greater reverence because it was He who formed matter into an orderly universe. The first man was an idea entirely of God's mind. This man was attracted to the beauty of Nature, personified as female, and he descended to unite with her. (Here is the Hermetic version of the fall of man.) This archetypal couple produced offspring who begat the first mortals. Humans retain a spark of the divine mind; this enables us to perceive God's handiwork in the processes of matter. Essential to the order of things is the principle of correspondences. Hidden connections underlie diverse phenomena that impress the mind with similar qualities and associations, such as colour, shape, weight, movement and even names with similar sounds and spellings. The material world, operating as it does according to God's design, can be studied to understand His will ('as above, so below'). The universe becomes a multilayered tableau of symbols. Chemicals and stars, for alchemists and astrologers, are symbolic and can be aligned with other symbols – mathematical, alphabetical, mythic and cosmic – all considered to be mystical. Humanity's divine spark inspires us to seek

reunion with the Divinity. Toward this end, the Hermetist employs alchemy, astrology and magic too. Magical formulae are based on the correspondences already noted: a ritual to induce creativity might be addressed to the Sun and might entail lamps, gold, 'Apollonian' music and a sunny mood. Magic used in pursuit of mystical goals is called theurgy. If the Hermetist fails as a theurgist, he can still achieve divine status as a reward at the end of a virtuous life.

Early Jewish Mysticism

Jewish mystics actively established secret disciplines at least as early as the I century AD.⁵ The II-century Mishna (a rabbinical compendium of religious law) mentions two esoteric pursuits: *Maaseh Bereshit* (the work of Creation) and *Maaseh Merkabah* (the work of the Throne).⁶ The former probably resembled the theurgy of contemporaneous Hermetists and Gnostics: they used ritual, prayer and contemplation in hopes of uniting with God. Linguistic and iconic formulae held special importance for the Gnostics, who believed that the heavenly spheres could be traversed by possessing the proper signs and salutations when approached by supernatural sentinels along the ascent. *Maaseh Merkabah* refers to the mobile throne or chariot that appeared to Ezekiel amid intense sound and light, which he understood as 'the glory of the Lord' (Ezekiel, 1-2:15). Merkabah mystics aspired to similar experiences. The effort was especially strong in Palestine and Mesopotamia from AD 300 to 1000. The imagery was elaborated to include the *Hekhaloth* (Heavenly Palaces), through which the mystics expected to ascend before approaching the Throne.

The *Sepher Yetzirah* (*Book of Formation* [or *Creation*]) briefly expresses several themes that became standard among mystical rabbis. The text claims to have been revealed to the Patriarch Abraham, while tradition attributes it to Rabbi Akiba, a visionary of the II century AD. The text actually emerged in Palestine or Mesopotamia some time between AD 100 and 600, and may have accumulated by stages.⁷

The *Sepher Yetzirah* cryptically discusses 'the 32 secret paths of wisdom'. These are the ten basic numerals plus the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Hebrew was revered as the language that the Bible represents as spoken by the Creator. The emphasis on numbers perhaps

indicates a debt to the Pythagoreans, who also venerated the decad as a cosmic system. In the *Sepher Yetzirah*, the ten integers are categories or stages or powers used by the Creator. They are called *sephiroth*, a neologism derived from *saphar* (to count). They have ordinal positions, but are not named in the text. The first of them is equated to the divine *Ruach* (Spirit), which also means breath and wind. This generates the sequence of the second, third and fourth *sephiroth*, associated with air, water and fire respectively. (Greek philosophy recognised another element, earth; but it is absent here.) The six lower *sephiroth* are spatial orientations: above, below, east, west, north, south. These directions are also linked to six permutations of the letters *Yod* (Y), *He* (H) and *Vau* (V). They are the letters that occur in God's sacred Name, YHVH, called the Tetragrammaton.

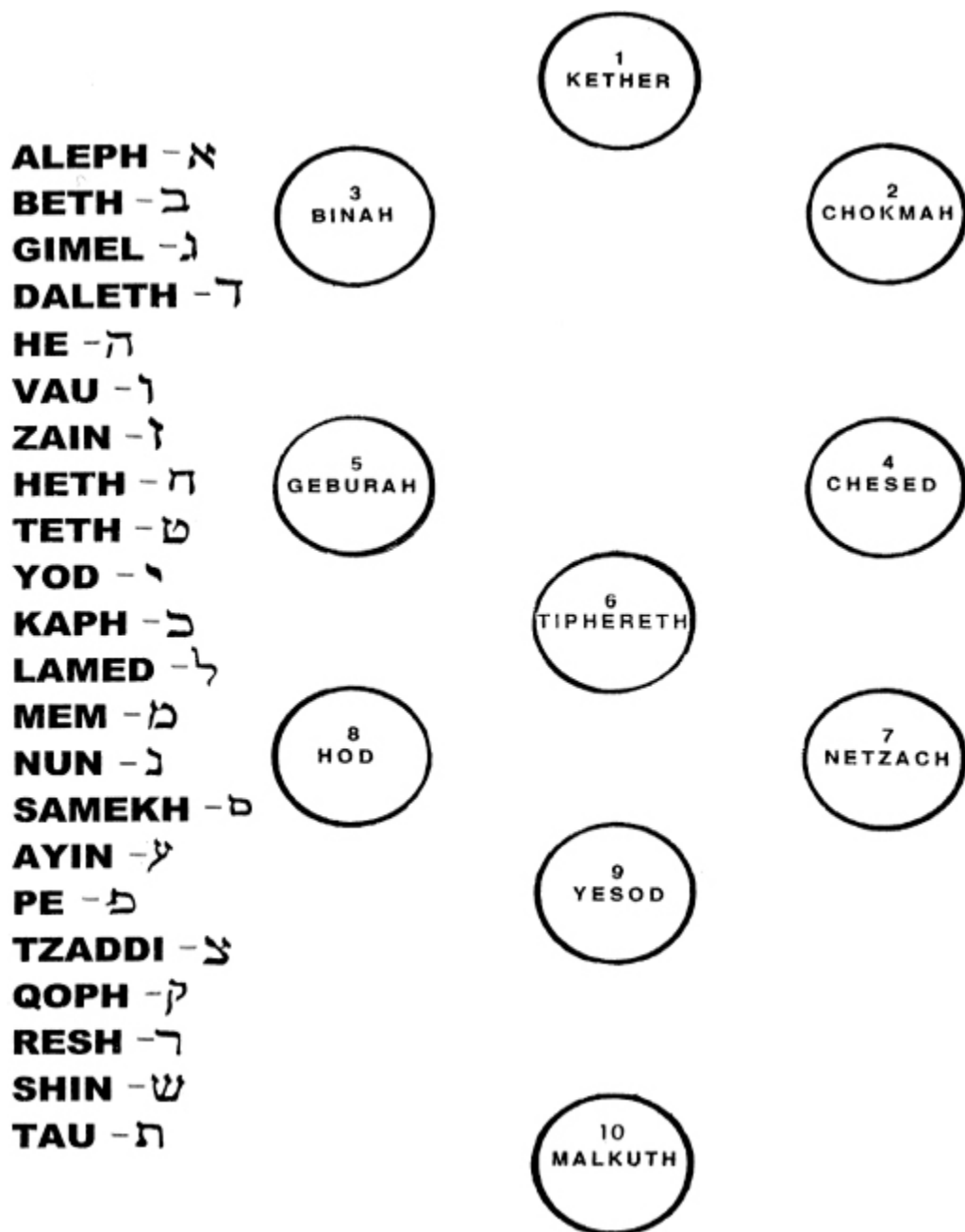


Figure 1 The Thirty-Two Paths of Wisdom (*left*: the 22 Hebrew letters; *right*: the 10 *sephiroth*).

In Hebrew, a close relationship obtains between letters and numbers, for alphabetical characters also have numerical values. The *Sepher Yetzirah* implies that the Hebrew alphabet is a system of sacred potencies operating in three spheres: man, universe and year. The book divides the Hebrew letters into three phonetic categories. Grouped as ‘mothers’ or ‘matrices’ are *Aleph* (an aspirate), *Mem* (a labial) and *Shin* (a sibilant). These three

correspond to the world's triads, such as the elements. Air and *Aleph* entail exhalations; water and *Mem* both murmur; fire and *Shin* cause hissing noises. Grouped as ‘doubles’ are seven letters (*Beth*, *Gimel*, *Daleth*, *Kaph*, *Pe*, *Resh* and *Tau*), each having hard and soft pronunciations. The ‘doubles’ together correspond to all heptads, including the seven planets; the specific assignment of planets to letters differs in the different texts of the *Sepher Yetzirah*.⁸ The two most usual such assignments are:

<i>Beth</i>	Moon	Saturn
<i>Gimel</i>	Mars	Jupiter
<i>Daleth</i>	Sun	Mars
<i>Kaph</i>	Venus	Sun
<i>Pe</i>	Mercury	Venus
<i>Resh</i>	Saturn	Mercury
<i>Tau</i>	Jupiter	Moon

Twelve ‘single’ or ‘simple’ letters each have one pronunciation. As a group they correspond to all duodecads, such as the signs of the zodiac. These are reliably aligned in their natural order beside the sequence of the remaining letters, as follows:

<i>He</i>	Aries
<i>Vau</i>	Taurus
<i>Zain</i>	Gemini
<i>Heth</i>	Cancer
<i>Teth</i>	Leo
<i>Yod</i>	Virgo
<i>Lamed</i>	Libra
<i>Nun</i>	Scorpio
<i>Samekh</i>	Sagittarius
<i>Ayin</i>	Capricorn
<i>Tzaddi</i>	Aquarius
<i>Qoph</i>	Pisces

The ‘mothers’, as elements, are combined in an anatomical model. Watery *Mem* corresponds to the belly, airy *Aleph* to the chest and fiery *Shin* to the brain.⁹ The rest of the alphabet is omitted from this scheme.

Commentaries on the *Sepher Yetzirah* were written at least as early as the X century. The book circulated among Jews not only in the Middle East but in Europe. In Provence, in the second half of the XII century, the term ‘Cabala’ (‘Tradition’) came to mean an oral transmission of secret wisdom from master to disciple. Some devotees appear to have absorbed Neoplatonism, although their immediate sources remain largely unidentified.

Jewish Cabala

The first Cabalistic text of major importance was the *Sepher ha-Bahir* (*Book of Brilliance* [or *Clarity*]), edited in Provence at the beginning of the XIII century. Parts of the book incorporate writings from the VIII century and even earlier, some involving Merkabah mysticism and Gnostic speculation. The editor of the *Bahir* remains unidentified: it is sometimes wrongly ascribed to Rabbi Nahunia ben ha-Kanah, a I-century mystic, whom the book credits with its first quotation. Most of the book's many citations, of Nahunia and of other teachers, have never been authenticated. The text – consisting of short questions and answers about Scripture, rabbinic homilies and the *Sepher Yetzirah* – is disjointed in thought and style, and combines Hebrew and Aramaic.

The *Bahir* expanded on the theory of the *sephiroth*, which it calls ‘vessels’, ‘crowns’, ‘kings’, ‘voices’ and ‘utterances’, the last term having already acquired associations with the utterances of God in the creation story in Genesis. The *sephiroth* are viewed in the *Bahir* as Gnostic intelligences emanating from God, or as archetypes in His mind. They are named, from highest to lowest, as:

- 1) Kether (Crown) 2) Chokmah (Wisdom) 3) Binah (Understanding) 4) Chesed (Mercy) 5) Pechad (Fear) 6) Kabodh (Glory) 7) Aravot (Heaven) 8) Yesod (Foundation) 9) Netzach (Victory) 10) Shekhinah (God's Presence).

Six or seven *sephiroth* are made to form a man's body, having a head, arms, torso and legs: the seventh *sephira* is ‘the bride’, man and wife being one flesh (cf. Genesis 2:24). The *sephiroth* are viewed also as a tree, especially the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. The *Bahir* describes its

tree as springing from the second-highest *sephira* and growing upside down, enmeshing *sephiroth* all the way to the tenth.

Rabbi Isaac the Blind (1160-1236), an influential Cabalist in Provence, wrote a commentary on the *Sepher Yetzirah*. He alludes to the roots and branches of the mystical tree. He modifies the names for some of the *sephiroth*, the seven lower ones – those beneath the supernal triad – being associated with the key terms in a biblical passage (I Chronicles, 29:11-13). This yields:

- 1) Kether (Crown) 2) Chokmah (Wisdom) 3) Binah (Understanding) 4) Gedulah (Greatness)
- 5) Geburah (Power) 6) Tiphereth (Beauty) 7) Netzach (Victory) 8) Hod (Honour) 9) Kol (All)
- 10) Mamlakhah (Kingship).

Isaac and his associates meditated on the letters in *Achad* (One) and in the Tetragrammaton. The Provençal Cabalists variously sought to synthesise the Tetragrammaton with the ten *sephiroth*; Isaac is the earliest known author to have stated that the *sephiroth* emanated from a higher realm, the *En Soph* (the Infinite). Before Isaac's death, disciples of his, such as Azriel and Ezra of Gerona, carried the Cabala to Spain.

At Gerona, a small town in Catalonia, the Cabalists began to consolidate and unify their doctrines. In describing the ten *sephiroth*, the Geronese school arrived at a consensus about their names and their sequence:

- 1) Kether (Crown) 2) Chokmah (Wisdom) 3) Binah (Understanding) 4) Chesed (Mercy) 5) Geburah (Power) 6) Tiphereth (Beauty) 7) Netzach (Victory) 8) Hod (Honour) 9) Yesod (Foundation) 10) Malkuth (Kingdom).

In other parts of Spain different preferences were exercised. Indeed, not all Cabalists accepted the basic Tree, instead envisioning the *sephiroth* in a single column or as ten concentric circles. But the Geronese Tree became widely known and accepted. Its nomenclature and its numeration of *sephiroth* will be treated as standard in this book, as having become traditional in general occultism, although not universal in Jewish Cabalism.

Abraham Abulafia (1240-c.92) was born in Saragossa, but travelled in the Near East, Greece, Sicily and Italy. After his return to Spain in the 1270s, he became an authority on the Cabala. He induced ecstatic trances through chanting, meditating on the permutations of letters in sacred words and contemplating the shapes of the letters. He had few followers in

Spain however, and soon departed for Italy and Greece; he alarmed other Cabalists by his extreme behaviour and by proclaiming himself to be the Messiah.

Joseph Gikatilla (1248-1323), a Castilian Cabalist, was Abulafia's disciple during the 1270s. Gikatilla wrote *Shaare Orach* (*Gates of Light*), which provides a long discussion of the *sephiroth*: it envisions them as luminous spheres. Gikatilla refers to the Tree of Life, but his image of it is quite elastic. It can refer to the second *sephira*, presumably because the Tree's root is there, and to the sixth *sephira*, presumably because the Tree's trunk could naturally stand there (in the central position). Gikatilla appears to have visualised the *sephiroth* as disposed in a sequence of three triads, with the central axis supporting *sephiroth* 1, 6, 9 and 10 (the last situated below the triads). When Gikatilla refers to specific *sephiroth*, he includes all their names as given by the Geronese school (see [figure 1](#)).

The most important Cabalistic treatise was the *Sepher ha-Zohar* (*Book of Splendour*), written anonymously by Moses de León of Guadalajara (c. 1240-1305), probably in the 1270s and 1280s. The book is an anthology of works of different genres. The author places his characters in ancient Palestine but errs in matters of chronology, geography and topography; the speeches are given to a II-century teacher, Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, and his associates. It is written in a strange Aramaic constructed from literary sources – the author could not disguise his conditioning by the history and culture of XIII-century Spain, showing a knowledge of Cabalistic literature from the *Bahir* to the work of Gikatilla (who in turn was influenced by the *Zohar*).

The *Zohar* is mainly composed of commentaries on the Torah, but adds various treatises, principally the 'Great Assembly', 'Small Assembly', 'Secrets of the Torah', 'Esoteric Midrash' and numerous small ones, including the 'Book of Concealment'. Moses de León circulated various excerpts from the *Zohar*. No early manuscript is complete. After Moses' death an unknown author added 'The Faithful Shepherd' and the 'Supplement to the *Zohar*'.

The oldest commentary devoted exclusively to 'the 32 paths of wisdom' is credited to Joseph Ashkenazi, also called Joseph the Tall, who lived in the 1300s. He relates the paths to the 32 times that Genesis uses the name of God, but neither identifies the first ten with the *sephiroth* nor associates those from the 11th to the 32nd with the letters of the alphabet or with any

pathways connecting the *sephiroth*. He names the 'paths of wisdom' as forms of transcendental awareness: Mystical Consciousness, Radiant Consciousness, Sanctified Consciousness, etc.

In 1492 the Spanish expelled the Jews. By 1530 a new centre for Cabalists had developed in Safed, in upper Galilee. The *Zohar* greatly influenced all the Cabalists attached to this centre, including Isaac Luria (1534-72), called the 'Ari'. He enhanced the Cabala's ethical content and revived Gnostic imagery, as is evident in his account of Creation. The *En Soph* emitted a ray of light that became the primordial man, Adam Kadmon. His cranial openings emitted the luminous *sephiroth*, which coalesced as vessels. They were to be differentiated by collecting 'heavier' light from Adam's eyes. The seven lower *sephiroth* proved inadequate, and they shattered. Adam, releasing a special ray from his forehead, replaced the broken vessels and preserved the intended order. However, the *Qlip-poth*, shards of the original vessels, endured as disruptive powers: this was the origin of evil.

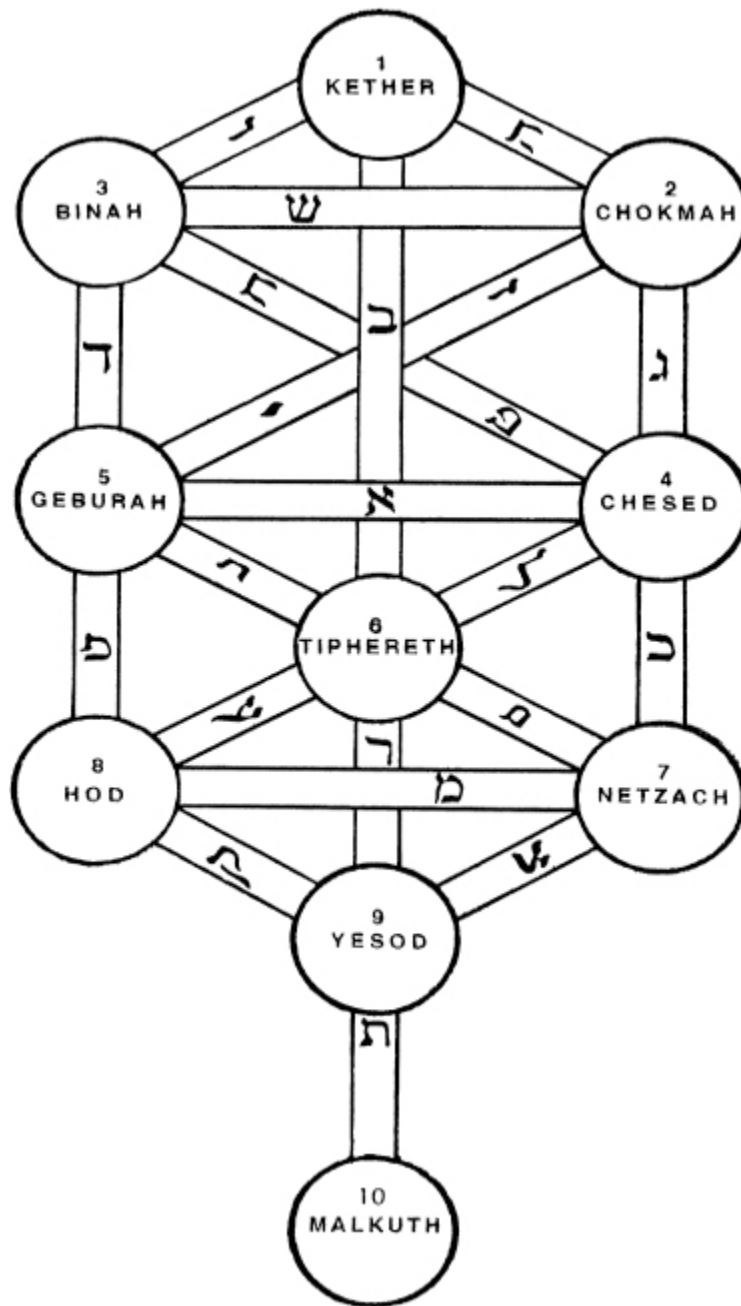


Figure 2 Letters applied to pathways: mothers (*horizontal*); doubles (*vertical*); singles (*diagonal*).

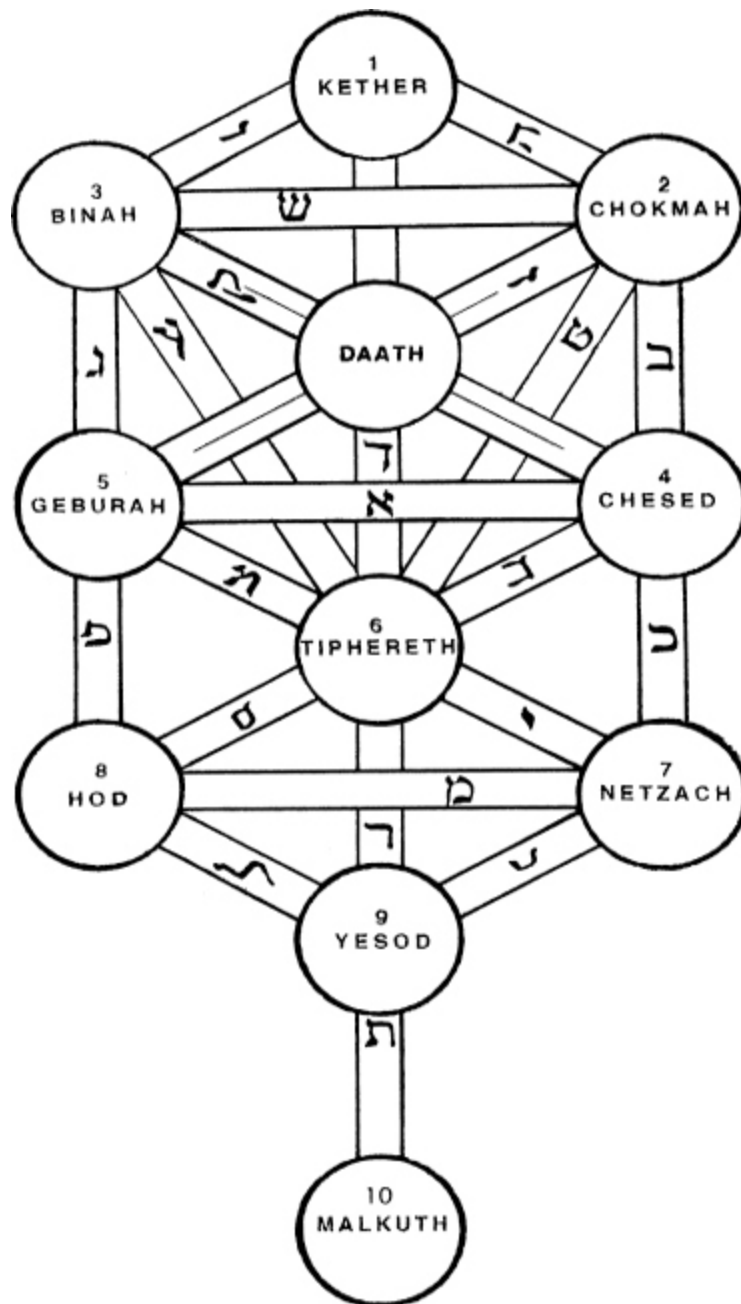


Figure 3 A Tree according to Luria.

In a diagram of the Tree of Life, adjacent spheres representing *sephiroth* can be linked by 22 lines in a symmetrical arrangement. It is best to distinguish between the 32 paths of wisdom and these 22 lines connecting the *sephiroth* in the Tree of Life by reserving the word 'paths' for the former and using the term 'pathways' for the connecting lines. Following the *Sepher Yetzirah*, the 32 paths are usually thought of as including both

the *sephiroth* themselves, as forming the first ten paths, and the 22 letters of the alphabet, forming the remaining paths from the 11th to the 32nd. The number of the pathways naturally prompted them to be associated with the 22 letters, and they are accordingly to be regarded as constituting the last 22 of the paths of wisdom; they can therefore be numbered 11th to 32nd. The numbering of the pathways, whether from 1 to 22 or from 11 to 32, is secondary: the assignment of letters is primary, and their numeration always tallies with it. In the most elegant systems for the pathways, there are three horizontal ones for the ‘mother’ letters, seven vertical ones for the ‘double’ letters, and twelve diagonals for the ‘simples’. This is the version of the Tree most widely accepted by students of the Cabala (see [figure 2](#)).

Although the *Sepher Yetzirah* is adamant about the number of *sephiroth* (‘ten, not nine; ten, not eleven’), Cabalists began to recognise an additional element, Daath (Knowledge): it appears as early as the XIII century.¹⁰ In Gikatilla's *Shaare Orah*, Daath is sometimes identified with Tiphereth, but is sometimes the entire middle column of *sephiroth*. By the time of Isaac Luria, Daath had become a distinct ‘pseudo-sephira’, centrally located below the supernal triad. One version of Luria's Tree is shown as [figure 3](#). But the Lurianic tradition also accepted a quite different arrangement, as shown in [figure 6](#). Here Daath figures as a full-fledged *sephira*, with pathways ending at and starting from it.

The Gaon of Vilna, Elijah ben Solomon (1720-97), reviewed the authoritative texts of the Cabala and published yet another version of the Tree. Here Daath is omitted. Compared to our previous examples, Tiphereth has been shifted upwards, to become *sephira* 4. Geburah and Chesed accordingly receive new numbers. Yesod also has been shifted upward, but it retains its usual number, 9. The 22 pathways are lettered according to the principle already mentioned: ‘mothers’ on horizontals, ‘doubles’ on verticals and ‘singles’ on diagonals (see [figure 4](#)).

Christian Cabalism

The Cabala meanwhile had been appropriated by Christian magicians, mystics, scholars and exegetes of the Bible. In 1486, the Italian syncretist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) studied Cabalistic texts translated for him by Samuel ben Nissim Abulfaraj, also called Raymondo Moncada, a Jewish convert to Christianity. Among humanist scholars, he

became ‘Flavius Mithridates’, well known as a teacher of oriental languages and a translator of Greek and Hebrew. Pico, like his friend Ficino, was attracted to the idea of the *prisca theologia*. Now the Cabala joined the mix with the ancient esoterica preserved in Greek.

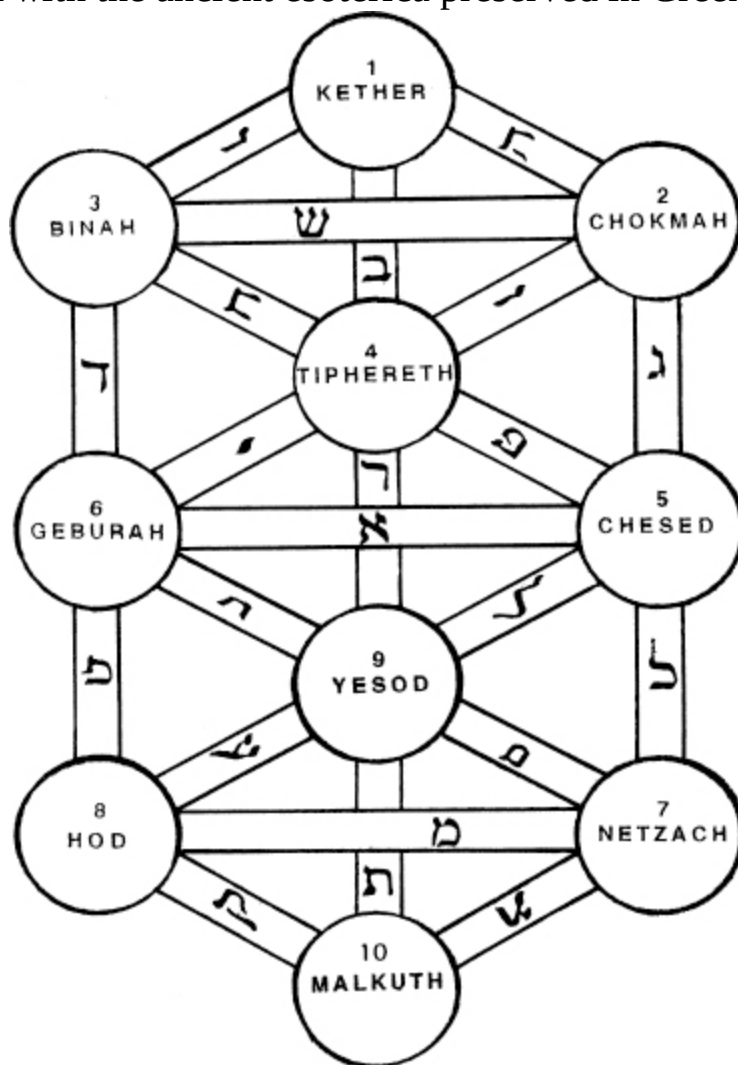


Figure 4 A Tree according to Elijah ben Solomon.

Christian Cabalists have generally operated apart from their Jewish counterparts. Even when Christians have had enough command of Hebrew to pursue the Cabala in its original language, they have often remained uninstructed in the primary texts and the evolution of the tradition in Jewish circles. At least until the time of Isaac Luria, Jewish Cabalists tended to keep their tradition away from the uninitiated – away from Christians above all. As for the Christians, they professed to honour the Hebrew Scriptures and even to acknowledge the Jews as God's chosen

people, but the usual interaction between the two groups was perfunctory, if not actively hostile. Although some Christians before Pico were aware of the Jewish Cabala, their expertise would not have been great. Cabalistic texts were generally scarce, and only negligible fragments had been translated into Latin.

The Cabala's audience expanded after the invention of moveable type. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa included cabalistic magic in his influential *De Occulta philosophia* (Antwerp, 1531). The *Sepher Yetzirah* and the *Zohar* were translated into Latin by Guillaume Postel (1510-81), even before the Hebrew originals were issued in print. Paulus Riccius was the author of *De coelesti agricultura* (*On Celestial Agriculture*) and the translator of the *Shaare Orah*, rendered in Latin as *Portae lucis* and published by Johannes Pistorius in his anthology, *Artis cabalisticae scriptores* (*Writers on the Cabalistic Art*, Basel, 1587). This also included two seminal works by the German Hebraicist Johannes Reuchlin (1456-1522). Modern Cabalism, both Jewish and Christian, has been greatly influenced by Isaac Luria. After his death, his disciples and their own followers began publishing interpretations of his ideas.¹¹ Joseph Ashkenazi's treatise on the 32 paths was translated into Latin by Johannes Rittangelius (Amsterdam, 1642).¹²

Following the example of Pico della Mirandola, a few Christian priests and monks sought to merge their faith with aspects of the Cabala.¹³ A link was provided by Greek philosophy, especially mystical Platonism, which had influenced both Jewish Cabalists and Christian visionaries and theologians. Christians had become fond of enumerating nine angelic choirs of angels.¹⁴ These had developed out of passages in the New Testament (Ephesians 1:21, Colossians 1:16). Pico, in his *Conclusions ... He-braeorum Cabalistarum* (conclusio II), lists nine angelic ranks: 'Cherubim, Seraphim, Hasmalim, Haiot, Aralim, Tarsisim, Ophanim, Tephshraim, Isim.' These are of Hebrew derivation, but most Jewish Cabalists recognised ten ranks, which could stand parallel to the ten *sephiroth*. The angelic choirs were of concern to Athanasius Kircher (1602-80), whose work strongly influenced Christian Cabalists.

Kircher entered the Jesuit novitiate at Paderborn in 1618, and was ordained a priest in 1628. His early career was full of adventure, owing to the Thirty Years' War; but he lived quietly in Rome from 1635 until his death. He wrote many books on a variety of subjects, and was especially occupied with comparative religion; he sympathetically discussed non-

Christian faiths. He wrote also on comparative linguistics, music, acoustics, geology, magnetism and the plague. He was particularly fascinated by ancient Egypt, and attempted unsuccessfully to decipher the hieroglyphs; but he did identify Coptic as a descendant of ancient Egyptian.

Oedipus Aegyptiacus (Rome, 1652-4), Kircher's major work on Egypt, includes an extensive dissertation on the Cabala. This long section contains an early subsection devoted to the Hebrew alphabet.¹⁵ The first part of this sets out with complete accuracy a list taken from a letter of St Jerome's to St Paul of Latin equivalents of homonyms for the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.¹⁶ Kircher goes on to list other associations with the Hebrew letters, presenting them as Cabalistic; he claims to derive them from Rabbi Akiba and was certainly following some genuine Cabalistic source.¹⁷ In accordance with that source, Kircher makes 27 letters, instead of 22, by including separately the final forms of five letters when at the end of a word, namely *Kaph*, *Mem*, *Nun*, *Pe* and *Tzaddi*. For some of the letters he again cites Latin versions of homonyms; these do not always coincide with those given in the first list, but all are taken from other works of St Jerome;¹⁸ of course, no homonyms are given for the final forms. The first ten letters, from *Aleph* to *Yod*, are associated with the ten *sephiroth*, and also with the ten ranks of angels as recognised by Cabalists.¹⁹ Kircher identifies each of the first nine Cabalistic ranks with one of the nine angelic ranks constituting the hierarchy of angels according to Christian writers; he translates 'ishim' as 'viri fortis' (strong men).²⁰ This has the bizarre result that Seraphim and Cherubim in the Cabalistic scheme are not identified with Seraphim and Cherubim in the Christian scheme. The next nine letters in Kircher's 27-letter alphabet are matched with the nine celestial spheres, starting with the *primum mobile*, followed by the sphere of fixed stars and then to the seven planetary spheres:

<i>Lamed</i>	Saturn
<i>Mem</i>	Jupiter
<i>Mem final</i>	Mars
<i>Nun</i>	Sun
<i>Nun final</i>	Venus

<i>Samekh</i>	Mercury
<i>Ayin</i>	Moon

The last eight letters of the 27-letter alphabet are co-ordinated with various components of the universe – spirit, the four elements, animals, and so on.^{[21](#)}

The above list of planets necessarily differs from all those given in the various versions of the *Sepher Yetzirah*: that text makes no mention of final forms. Kircher was aware of this, for he refers to and quotes from both the *Sepher Yetzirah* and the *Zohar*. He explains the distinction between the mother letters, the doubles and the simples. He associates *Shin* with fire and *Mem* with water, but diverges from the *Sepher Yetzirah* by associating earth with *Aleph*: air he assigns to what he calls ‘circulus’ (circle), which he does not explain but symbolises by a sun with a face.^{[22](#)} He follows the *Sepher Yetzirah* in his associations of the signs of the zodiac with the simple letters, but cites the *Sepher Yetzirah* as giving yet another association of planets with double letters, as follows:^{[23](#)}

<i>Beth</i>	Sun
<i>Gimel</i>	Venus
<i>Daleth</i>	Mercury
<i>Kaph</i>	Moon
<i>Pe</i>	Saturn
<i>Resh</i>	Jupiter
<i>Tau</i>	Mars

22, rather than from 11 to 32, and lists them in the text, with the *sephiroth* they connect.²⁵ The underlying array of the *sephiroth* is as in [figure 1](#), and they are numbered accordingly. It will be seen from [figure 5](#) that Kircher follows a completely different principle in assigning Hebrew letters to the pathways, and consequently numbering them, from that followed in [figures 2](#) and [3](#), and also arranges them differently; but Professor Moshe Idel, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has told us that Kircher's association of letters to pathways was in accordance with a known Cabalistic tradition. In Kircher's illustration, the names of the *sephiroth* are given, in Hebrew and in Latin, within the spheres representing them as:

- 1) Kether (Crown) 2) Chokmah (Wisdom) 3) Binah (Understanding) 4) Chesed (Mercy) 5) Pechad (Fear) 6) Tiphereth (Beauty) 7) Netzach (Victory) 8) Hod (Honour) 9) Yesod (Foundation) 10) Malkuth (Kingdom).

Other Latin labels, placed above spheres 4 and 8, give alternative names meaning 'Magnificence' and 'Glory', respectively. In Kircher's text, he uses for *sephira* 4 the name Gedulah (Greatness, Magnanimity), for 5 the alternative Geburah (Power, Fortitude); as an alternative name for Netzach, he gives the Latin for 'Eternity triumphant'.

A principle followed in Kircher's numbering of the pathways and association of letters with them is that a pathway leading from a higher (lower-numbered) *sephira* is always associated with a letter earlier in the alphabet, and has a lower number, than one leading from a lower (higher-numbered) one. The arrangement of the pathways in Kircher's diagram became predominant among non-Jewish students of the Cabala: they seem unaware that Jewish Cabalists contemplated alternative diagrams and favoured quite different principles for associating the pathways with letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The variations produce a quandary for the practical Cabalist seeking to traverse the *sephiroth* in mystical visions or wishing to evoke angels from specific spheres. Even when the Tree conforms to the Geronese order of *sephiroth*, the pathways can vary in their disposition and in their coordination with Hebrew letters. In the following lists, the pairs of Arabic numbers denote pathways as they communicate between the two *sephiroth* bearing those numbers. The rightmost column gives, for comparison, the pathways on a Tree congruent with our [figure 5](#), but with the association of letters as given by a contemporary Cabalist, Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, for instance in his book

The Way of Kabbalah (London, 1976). Here the principle is that a pathway leading to a higher (lower-numbered) *sephira* is always associated with a letter earlier in the alphabet than one leading to a lower (higher-numbered) *sephira*.

LETTERS	PATHWAYS		
	figures 2 & 3	figure 5 (Kircher)	Halevi
Aleph	4-5	1-2	1-2
Beth	2-4	1-3	2-3
Gimel	3-5	1-6	1-3
Daleth	1-6	2-3	2-4
He	1-2	2-6	4-5
Vau	1-3	2-4	3-5
Zain	2-5	3-6	5-6
Heth	4-6	3-5	1-6
Teth	2-6	4-5	2-6
Yod	6-7	4-6	3-6
Kaph	4-7	4-7	4-6
Lamed	8-9	5-6	6-7
Mem	7-8	5-8	4-7
Nun	7-9	6-7	7-8
Samekh	6-8	6-9	5-8
Ayin	3-6	6-8	6-8
Pe	5-8	7-8	8-9
Tzaddi	5-6	7-9	6-9
Qoph	3-4	7-10	7-9
Resh	6-9	8-9	9-10
Shin	2-3	8-10	7-10
Tau	9-10	9-10	8-10

Christian Cabalists also relied on the *Kabbala denudata* (*The Cabala Unveiled*, Vol. I, Sulzbach, 1677; Vol. II, Frankfurt, 1684) by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-89). He too discusses the ranks of angels and gives their Hebrew names.²⁶ He makes use of legitimate sources, including the *Zohar*, Gikatilla's *Gates of Light* and some of Luria's concepts. Luria is the authority for von Rosenroth's treatment of the Cabalistic Tree.²⁷ In a section at the end of Vol. I of the *Kabbala denudata*, Rosenroth shows a diagram of the Tree, with Daath as one of eleven *sephiroth*, as part of his *figura XVI* (shown in our [figure 6](#)); on subsequent pages he lists the pathways, with their associated letters and the *sephiroth* they connect.²⁸ None of the pathways in the diagram is horizontal, so that the principle of assigning the mother letters to horizontal pathways has no application; instead, the last four letters of the alphabet are assigned to the vertical pathways forming the middle column. This version of the Tree differs from the Lurianic Tree shown in our [figure 3](#) in treating Daath as

one *sephira* among the rest. Luria may well have given out various versions of the Tree: his followers often attribute differing opinions to him.

Of the many metaphors generated by Jewish Cabalists, the most dominant among Christians were the Tree of Life and a few associated images from the *Zohar*: the abyss, the cup of blessings, the serpent and the lightning flash. The lightning was probably inspired by a passage in the *Sepher Yetzirah* which refers to the human intuition as it fleetingly perceives the nature of divinity. For Cabalists, the lightning flash symbolised the course of divine emanations descending as the *sephiroth*.²⁹ The opposite progression is called the serpent;³⁰ it is imagined as coiling sequentially through the *sephiroth*. Among Christian Cabalists, the serpent is sometimes called Nehushtan, the brazen serpent that Moses displayed as a cure for snakebite (Numbers 21:8-9, II Kings 18:4). The array of *sephiroth* is also likened to a cup of blessings,³¹ apparently a chalice with its sides surrounding Tiphereth and their base at Malkuth. The great abyss is indeed mentioned in the *Zohar*, although ambiguously located among the *sephiroth*.³² Cabalists considered that the abyss should isolate the lower *sephiroth* from the highest triad, traditionally said to lie beyond human comprehension.

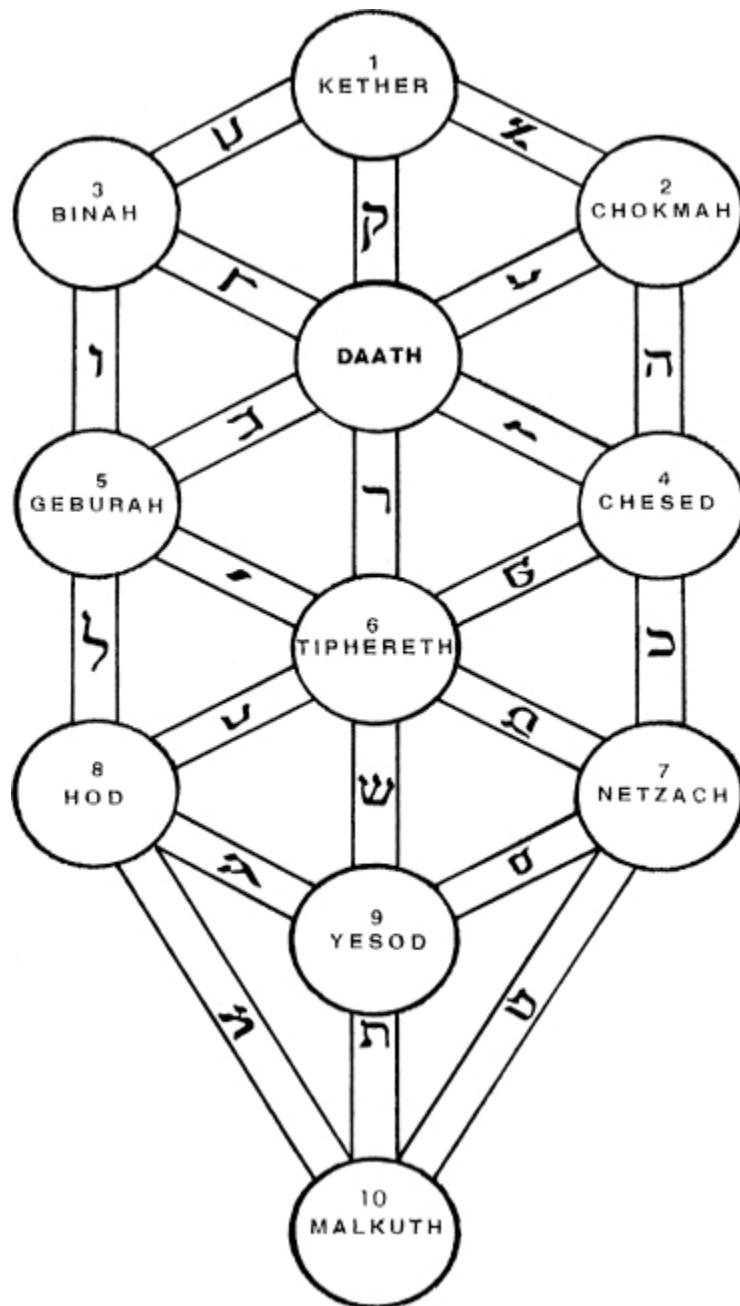


Figure 6 A Lurianic Tree with Daath.

In England Cabalism attracted the attention of John Dee (1527-1608), a mathematician, and Robert Fludd (1574-1623), a physician. Both developed cosmic schemes involving choirs of angels, planets and alphabetical correspondences. Fludd, yearning for esoteric knowledge, was excited by reports of a mysterious group of adepts called 'Rosicrucians'.

The Rosicrucians

In 1614 a volume was published at Cassel, in Germany, entitled *General Reformation of the Whole Wide World*.³³ This was a German translation of a chapter from a very recently published Italian book, *News from Parnassus*, by the pessimistic liberal Catholic Traiano Boccalini.³⁴ In this chapter Apollo, holding court on Mount Parnassus, deplores the wretched state of the world and calls for a genuine reformation, but rejects as impractical the proposals then made to effect one. What makes the volume published at Cassel important is that annexed to it is the *Fama Fraternitatis*, also in German despite its Latin title. This is attributed to the 'praiseworthy Order of the Rosy Cross' and said to have been 'written for all the scholars and princes of Europe'. It speaks of a Brotherhood founded in Germany by a Frater C.R., or C. Ros. C., after he had lived long in the East, where he had learned many secrets from the wise men in Damascus and from the 'Elementary inhabitants' of Fez, and had translated 'the Book M' from Arabic into Latin. This book is said to have inspired Theophrastus (Paracelsus), although he was not himself a Rosicrucian. At first, the Brotherhood consisted of only four men, referred to solely by initials, who devised a magical language and a dictionary for it; but later it expanded to eight members, all sworn to chastity and charity. The Brotherhood was to remain secret for a hundred years.

The *Fama* goes on to relate the finding of the seven-sided vault in which Frater C.R. was buried; although the sun did not shine in it, it was lit by another sun in the centre of the ceiling. C.R.'s body, discovered under the altar, was found to be incorrupt; an inscription gave it as having been hidden for 120 years. The *Fama* ends by proclaiming that there will be a general reformation both of divine and human things. The religion of the Brothers is declared to be Protestant, and their philosophy to have come from Adam. This philosophy is indicated as being connected with the Cabala, and, above all, with alchemy; but it is stated to have nothing to do with the transmutation of baser metals into gold.

In 1615 another book was published at Cassel, this time in Latin, called *A Short Consideration of the More Secret Philosophy*.³⁵ This was a summary of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* of 1564, in which the significance of the 'monas symbol' is expounded. As before, the volume's importance lies in the inclusion of a second Rosicrucian manifesto, written

in Latin, called *Confessio Fraternitatis R.C.*, addressed ‘to the learned men of Europe’. In the same year, the *Fama* and the *Confessio* were republished together in a bilingual form.

Although it frequently refers to the *Fama* by title, and purports to originate (and presumably did originate) from the same circle, it is doubtful whether the *Confessio* is by the same hand, since its tone is decidedly different. In particular, despite the reliance of the *Fama* on the work of Boccalini, who had urged the toleration of Protestants and all others, it is virulently anti-Catholic. The *Confessio* presents the Brotherhood as advanced in knowledge, protected by God and unobserved by mortals. This was to engender a widespread belief that the Brothers were invisible. Nevertheless, the *Confessio* continues, the Brotherhood is to be divided into degrees, so that even some of the unlearned may be able to belong. The year of the founder's birth is now given as 1378; he is stated to have lived to the age of 106, and hence until 1484. Since the *Fama* had described his tomb as being discovered 120 years after his death, this would date the event to 1604. The Brothers of the Rosy Cross end by acknowledging themselves ‘truly and sincerely to profess Christ, condemn the Pope, addict themselves to the true philosophy, and daily call, entreat and invite many more into our Brotherhood’.

The full name of Frater C.R.C. does not appear in either the *Fama* or the *Confessio*, but is always taken as being Christian Rosencreutz (or Rosenkreuz). It appears in this form in a work by Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*,^{[36](#)} published anonymously in 1616. This book is assumed by many, including Frances Yates,^{[37](#)} to have been of Rosicrucian authorship; the two manifestos are often credited to Andreae. It has been conclusively demonstrated by J.M. Montgomery, however, that Andreae was not an ally but an implacable opponent of Rosicrucianism, though this best known of his many books was widely misunderstood, at the time and ever since.^{[38](#)}

The intention behind the manifestos is obscure. They retailed no new ideas; only the material they accompanied, filched from disparate sources, Boccalini and Dee, had anything substantive to tell the readers. The fantastic account of the tomb of Frater C.R. seems a clear indication that the entire story of his life, and of the foundation of the Brotherhood, was never intended to be understood literally, but as an allegory; although some took it at face value, then as later. Among those who paid any

attention to the manifestos, most assumed that there existed some actual small association, anxious to expand, with an ideology that combined magic and Protestant Christianity and a plan for regeneration of civil and ecclesiastical society. They were soon disappointed. The Rosicrucians were vigorously attacked in print, and as vigorously defended; but nothing else happened. Some responded to the invitation to join the Brotherhood by publicly announcing their wish to do so; others awaited the proclamation of a strategy for reform. But nothing was forthcoming: no means of joining the Brotherhood was ever disclosed, nor any plan for reformation announced. Nothing more was heard from the Brothers of the Rosy Cross, who thus proved themselves to be truly invisible. The interest aroused by the *Fama* and the *Confessio* rapidly evaporated; the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War raised graver concerns.

The manifestos had a long-lasting importance, all the same, for they had created a potent occultist myth. Hermetic and Cabalistic teachings are not authenticated by scientific or deductive proof, nor even by personal experience, but by being part of an ancient wisdom transmitted from the remote past. Such teachings are the more immune from question when they can be said to have been transmitted, not by texts available to all, but by a chain of initiates sworn to secrecy. Once Hermes Trismegistus and other sages of antiquity had become suspect, it became all the more important to identify some succession of secret adepts. This was not easy, since Renaissance magicians – the alchemists excepted – had not insisted on secrecy. Masonry had its alleged secret sources, such as the Templars; but for non-Masonic occultists, almost the only secret body that could plausibly be claimed to have existed for many centuries was the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. If the legend of Christian Rosencreutz were accepted, it stretched back to the XIV century, and was then linked with the secret wisdom of the east. There have thus been a multitude of occult societies borrowing the name of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross or pretending continuity with them. One of these, founded in Germany in 1757, was the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross of the Ancient System, which claimed an original foundation by an Egyptian priest of Alexandria.³⁹ It had a hierarchy of nine grades and, being involved in politics, maintained the strictest secrecy. For this purpose, it was divided into small cells, so that each member knew only his colleagues and his immediate superior. It ceased to operate in 1787. A century later, in 1888,

there was founded in France the Cabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross, which had no political interests and whose head was the occultist Stanislas de Guaita (1861-97). We shall encounter yet another society that claimed descent from the original Brotherhood; an exhaustive account of all the groups making fictitious claims to descend from that fictitious body would fill many pages.

CHAPTER 1

International Innovations

It was in France that Tarot cards were first incorporated into the theory and practice of magic. In 1781 Antoine Court de Gébelin, in Volume VIII of his massive *Monde primitif*, published his famous Tarot essay along with one by the comte de Mellet, both propounding an ancient Egyptian origin for the pack. The professional fortune-teller who called himself Etteilla promptly adopted this theory and exploited it for cartomantic use; he invented for the purpose a greatly altered type of Tarot pack, based on the Hermetic books, and named it the 'Book of Thoth'. In the middle of the XIX century, Éliphas Lévi, repudiating Etteilla's theories, integrated a more traditional version of the Tarot into occultist doctrine by another means: Lévi associated the pack, quite erroneously, with the Cabala. Meanwhile, outside France, variegated types of occultism absorbed new movements: Swedenborgianism, Mesmerism and spiritualism. In the 1880s, the occult Tarot was added to these. Ever since, it has been axiomatic among followers of the Western tradition of magic that the Tarot is an essential component of the occult sciences.

Forerunners of spiritualism: Swedenborg

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was born in Stockholm. He was the second son of Jesper Swedberg, a pietist who later became a Lutheran bishop. When Jesper was ennobled in 1719, he and his family assumed the name Swedenborg. Emanuel was an excellent craftsman, linguist and scholar. He earned a degree at the University of Uppsala, then travelled widely for his further studies of science and technology. He conceived advances in mining, transport, navigation, weaponry and clockwork. He wrote on mathematics, chemistry and astronomy. In his *Opera philosophica et mineralogica* (Leipzig, 1734), he envisioned 'pure motion' as Creation's first stage, followed by vortical movements at two levels, in the vibration of atoms and in the formation of planets. Satisfied that he

had penetrated the essence of inorganic matter, he then decided to locate the seat of the human soul. He studied anatomy and physiology, and his subsequent books synthesised the latest technical knowledge in those fields.

Swedenborg began to examine metaphysical questions. In 1734 he wrote *Of the Infinite*, telling of his encounter with transcendental 'other minds'.¹ In about 1745, he beheld a direct vision of God. Thereafter he seemed able to instigate regular communication with heavenly beings – this while in his physical body and while fully alert to his physical surroundings, without any magical trappings or rituals. He remained a Christian, but accommodated Christian doctrines to his personal visions. He borrowed or reinvented the concept of mystical correspondences, and regarded the material world as the sensory reflection of a spiritual one; he interpreted the Bible's historical narratives as spiritual symbols of eternal truths. Christ's Second Coming, in Swedenborg's view, will not occur as a universal Last Judgement, but as a personal revelation akin to his own. This does not end the soul's advancement. It can continue, even after death, on other planes. Swedenborg's best-known work is *Heaven and Hell* (London, 1758).

Swedenborg preferred a simple life. He never married. However, he wrote *Amor conjugialis* (*Conjugal Love*, Amsterdam, 1768) to extol the spiritual worth of marital relations. He presumed that loving couples could maintain their unions in the afterlife and could continue their spiritual growth together. These concepts encouraged the search for one's spiritual 'affinity' in this life. Swedenborg died in London in 1772. His admirers continued to publish his mystical writings. He had not intended to establish a new religious denomination, but the New Jerusalem Church, based on his ideas, was founded in 1787.

Forerunners of spiritualism: Mesmer

Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) was born at Iznang in Austria. He studied philosophy, theology and astrology, as well as medicine at Ingolstadt and Vienna. In 1766 he finished his doctoral dissertation, in which he adopted Paracelsus's opinions on human health as influenced by the planets. In 1774 Mesmer witnessed experiments in the use of magnets for healing. He hypothesised that magnetism was a tenuous substance permeating the universe and regulating the planets and living organisms

too; he believed that disease resulted from imbalances in the magnetic fluid residing in the body. He imagined that a balance could be achieved by the application of magnets and by the therapist's projection of 'animal magnetism' through a gesture or a penetrating gaze. Thus confronted, Mesmer's patients typically shuddered and fainted. They often woke having been spectacularly cured. Mesmer's reputation suddenly declined when one of his most prominent clients in Vienna suffered a dramatic relapse and he was asked to leave the country. In 1778 he settled in Paris.

Although Mesmer considered himself an objective physician, he joined the newly founded Golden and Rosy Cross of the Ancient System, which pretended to wisdom dating back to pharaonic Egypt, and became perpetual president of the fashionable Society of Universal Harmony.² He added ceremony to his medical practice: surrounded by mysterious symbols and accompanied by music, he would appear in a robe of flowing taffeta and dramatically touch his patients with his fingertip, his hands or a magnetised rod. His popularity encouraged him to establish a clinic where entire groups of clients could be accommodated simultaneously. The clients would grasp iron rods that projected from oak tubs containing water, ground glass and iron filings, intended to collect the magnetic substance. Court de Gébélín was one such client, who had joined the Society of Universal Harmony. De Gébélín desired treatment for severe discomfort in his legs. He obtained partial relief, but after a relapse he returned for further treatment, and died while attached to one of the tubs. In the same year (1784) King Louis XVI established a royal commission to investigate Mesmer's hypothesis of 'animal magnetism'. After seven years of deliberation, the commission reported that 'magnetic' healing could be explained by the power of suggestion. Mesmer's practice diminished, and he retired to Versailles. He later lived briefly in Switzerland, then settled near Iznang for the rest of his life.

Esoterists accepted the main suppositions in Mesmer's theory: the power of one's will can effect changes in other persons through its adjustment of a universal 'fluid'. But adepts did not abandon their usual faith in the supernatural: volitional focus and animal magnetism were simply added to the old repertoire of magic.

Forerunners of spiritualism: Cagliostro

In 1772, the year of Swedenborg's death, London saw the advent of a famous magician who was greatly attracted to Swedenborg's ideas. The traveller called himself 'Count Alessandro Cagliostro' (1743?-95). He is usually assumed to have been a Sicilian charlatan named Giuseppe Balsamo.³ On a second visit to London, Cagliostro became a Freemason, and he enhanced his reputation as an herbalist, seer and conjurer. He was implicated in several scandals, quite possibly engineered by his enemies. Perhaps in order to avoid prosecution, he abruptly left London to wander through France, the Lowlands, Prussia, Poland and Russia. He was received by royalty and befriended by other Masons and esoterists.

In France, Cagliostro founded a mystical society, the Egyptian Rite, open to all who respected the tenets of Freemasonry. His activities included communication with spirits, often through a 'dove' – a virgin girl or boy who beheld visions in the reflective surface of a glass globe or bottle. The settings were laden with magical and Masonic accoutrements. Cagliostro gave his followers a mysterious emblem, an S-shaped serpent, standing on its tail and transfixed by a downward-pointing arrow.⁴

Catholic clergymen excoriated Cagliostro as a blasphemer, and in 1785 he was falsely accused and imprisoned for the theft of a diamond necklace intended for Queen Marie Antoinette. He was cleared of the charge and released from the Bastille. He quitted France and returned to England.

Mesmerism meets magic

In the 1780s Mesmeric entrancement was usurped for magical uses, as by Cagliostro's followers, and its investigation was neglected by serious doctors. To the dismay of Dr Mesmer, his teachings were diverted to supernatural mysteries by his own students, such as Armand-Marie-Jacques de Chastenet, marquis de Puységur (1751-1825). His subjects experienced no Mesmeric 'shocks', but lucid sleep. In this state, the *lucides* (seers) or 'somnambulists' diagnosed their own illnesses, reported on distant events and answered questions that in everyday life would have been beyond their ken. J.P.F. Deleuze (1753-1835), a pupil of Puységur, revived medical interest in Mesmerism, but the vogue for the paranormal preoccupied Deleuze's own associate, Baron Jules Dupotet de Sennevoy (1796-1881). By the 1820s Dupotet was convinced that his *lucides* could prophesy, speak in tongues and, with only mental effort, levitate inanimate objects and themselves. Dupotet believed that these trances could be

induced by geometric symbols (akin to the magical sigils of mediaeval spellbooks) and by fixed attention to a point of darkness or of light, as in a magic mirror. According to Mesmerists, the mirror collected magnetic fluid. Some of Dupotet's Mesmerised seers described travelling 'in the spirit' to visit completely different worlds. Dupotet published his observations in his *Journal du Magnétisme* (1845-61). A 'land of spirits' was described also by the subjects of Alphonse-Louis Cahagnet (1809-85), a craftsman turned Mesmerist. The spirits included humans who had previously lived on earth; Cahagnet thus became convinced of the soul's immortality. In January 1848 he issued the first two of his three-volume *Magnétisme: Arcanes de la vie future dévoilés* (*Magnetism: Secrets of the Afterlife Revealed*, Paris, 1848-54). These books purportedly transcribed the actual reports of the entranced *lucides*. Cahagnet used magic mirrors, introduced to him, he said, by the spirit of Swedenborg. Cahagnet recommended the use of hashish and opium to intensify the visions in the mirrors.

Magical Mesmerism had by this time become well known in England. Dupotet received permission to practise there, and his exhibitions were defended by Philip Henry, the fourth Earl Stanhope (1781-1855). Dupotet dedicated *An Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism* (London, 1838) to Stanhope. The first volume of Cahagnet's *Magnétisme* appeared in English as *The Celestial Telegraph: or, Secrets of the Life to Come Revealed through Magnetism* (London, 1850). Earl Stanhope himself used Mesmerism to treat epileptics. He also engaged women as seers in the manner of Cagliostro's 'doves', using reflective vessels but also crystals and Mesmeric mirrors. This activity was taken up by another of Stanhope's acquaintances, the astrologer 'Zadkiel', whose actual name was Lieutenant Richard Morrison (1795-1874). Belonging to the same circle was Frederick Hockley (1808-85), who began observing crystal gazers in his youth. He said that crystals enabled his seers to converse with mortals and spirits far distant in time and/or space. By 1869 Hockley's transcriptions of the sessions amounted to 30 volumes, with some 12,000 entries.⁵ His special contact was the Crowned Angel of the Seventh Sphere. Hockley believed in Mesmeric powers, but did not think that they were necessary for successful crystal gazing.

Edward Bulwer (1803-73), upon succeeding to the estate of his mother, Elizabeth Lytton Bulwer, renamed himself Bulwer-Lytton, under which

name he wrote novels and plays. He was elected to Parliament in 1831 and 1832. In 1866 he became the first Baron Lytton of Knebworth. He enjoyed a high standing among would-be Rosicrucians, who took his fictions as proof that he had been initiated as a true magician, perhaps even one superior to themselves. In fact, nothing in Bulwer-Lytton's novels indicates his reliance on any unpublished sources. His Rosicrucian universe is populated with Neoplatonic spirits, Gothic apparitions and Baroque elementals (the gnomes, undines, sylphs, and salamanders as imagined by Paracelsus and Montfaucon de Villars). Especially popular was Bulwer-Lytton's 'Rosicrucian' novel, *Zanoni* (London, 1842). The first setting in the story is a Covent Garden bookshop specialising in magic and occult philosophy. (Bulwer-Lytton modelled the shop on that of John Denley, for whom the young Frederick Hockley had worked as a clerk and a copier of manuscripts.) The story's central character, Zanoni, is a disciple of the enigmatic Mejnour. They belong to a secret society anterior even to the Rosicrucians. Aspirants to higher spirituality must confront and subdue a gruesome monster, 'the Dweller of the Threshold', presumably symbolic of one's deepest fears. Mejnour has passed the test and achieved genius and immortality, but in the process he surrendered all emotion. When Zanoni succeeds, he chooses to remain mortal and thus preserve his human passions and values.

Lévi on spirits, astral light and Tarot

By 1852, Éliphas Lévi had met Paul Christian (1811-77) and Heöné Wronski (1778-1853) and begun concentrating on occult studies. In 1854 and 1861, Lévi visited England and met Lord Lytton. Lévi was persuaded to call up the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana. (The ceremony may have been sponsored by a 'Magic Club' that Lytton is supposed to have founded in London.⁶) Lévi thought that he had succeeded in summoning an apparition but was never certain that it was Apollonius. On the contrary, he did not believe in spiritualism. He theorised that the astral fluid retains memories of persons who were powerful in life, and the spiritualist merely reads from the astral record. Historians have asserted that Lévi was influenced by Lytton, but the influence was probably reciprocal. After their meeting, Lytton rewrote *Zanoni* to say

Mejnour professed to find a link between all intellectual beings in the existence of a certain all-pervading fluid resembling electricity, yet distinct from the known operations of that mysterious agency - a fluid that connected thought to thought with the rapidity and precision of the modern telegraph, and the influence of this fluid, according to Mejnour, extended to the remotest past, - that is to say, whenever and wheresoever man had thought. Thus, if the doctrine were true, all human knowledge became attainable through a medium established between the brain of the individual inquirer and all the farthest and obscurest regions in the universe of ideas.⁷

References to ‘magnetised electricity and astral light are plentiful in Lévi's writings. In one of his written lessons, he clearly implies that the ‘astral current’ is shown on the Tarot's 2 of Coins.⁸ He is referring to the card in the Tarot de Marseille, which typically shows the two circular emblems connected and entwined by an S-shaped scroll, rather than a current. It ‘separates and at the same time attracts the two polaric seats’. These complementary points (the Coins themselves) are marked by ‘a lotus flower with a halo’. In actuality, the Coins have a mere filigree at their centres. In *La Clef des grands mystères (The Key of the Great Mysteries*, Paris, 1861), Lévi writes

Men and things are magnetized by light like the suns, and, by means of electro-magnetic chains whose tension is caused by sympathies and affinities, are able to communicate with each other from one end of the world to the other, to caress or strike, wound or heal, in a manner doubtless natural, but invisible, and of the nature of prodigy.⁹

A variety of occult phenomena could thus be explained without placing credence in communication with spirits of the dead. But Lévi did not mean to discredit other spirits: those of higher intelligence he considered worthy of contacting. For this purpose, he found Tarot to be unsurpassed. It was, he said, an oracular instrument ‘by means of which one can communicate with the seven genii of the spheres and the seventy-two wheels of Assiah [Manifestation], of Yetzirah [Creation], and of Briah [Emanation]. For that purpose it is sufficient to understand the system of universal analogies, such as Swedenborg has set forth ...’.¹⁰ The ‘wheels’ (active in three cabalistic realms) were angels, personifications of God's 72 names in the *Shem ha-Mephoresh*. Swedenborg's ‘analogies’ here had been forced into a new context: he did not discuss the Tarot, of which he was probably unaware.

American spiritualism

Upstate New York – the entirety of the state outside Manhattan and the adjacent islands – was the setting for much social and religious upheaval in the XIX century. In the Shaker settlement near Watervliet, worshippers received messages from angels. Near Palmyra, Joseph Smith recorded the angelic revelations unique to the Mormon religion. John Humphrey Noyes led his community of eugenicists to settle at Oneida, New York. Rochester was the residence of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and other anti-slavery advocates. While still a teenager, Andrew Jackson Davis (1826-1909) became known as ‘The Poughkeepsie Seer’. He was unschooled, but when Mesmerised, he seemed knowledgeable about medicine and skilled in foreign languages. He reported visions that centred on a vast sphere of divine fire with countless universes spinning out from it. The human soul, he thought, enjoys a succession of lives as it passes through a variety of worlds and levels of existence, finally returning to the Creator. Souls on earth may meet and recognise their ‘soul affinity’. Their union supposedly guarantees the ascent of couples in the afterlife. If their quest remains unfulfilled during their earthly lives, it can be pursued in the spirit world. Davis's imagery – vortical universes, heavenly hierarchies, mystical unions and spiritual evolution after physical death – together suggest a debt to Swedenborg. Davis however claimed not to have read Swedenborg's books but to have been instructed by his spirit.

On 31 March 1848 in Hydesville, a village near Rochester, John D. Fox's youngest children, Catherine (aged seven) and Margaretta (aged ten), began to maintain that they could communicate with the spirit of a forgotten pedlar. The pedlar allegedly reported that he had been murdered while visiting their house during an earlier tenancy. The ‘communications’ manifested as percussive noises from random parts of the house. They were soon refined into sharp raps indicating ‘yes’, ‘no’ and the letters of the alphabet. This method became known as ‘spiritual telegraphy’. The girls pursued careers as psychic mediums, appearing in public assemblies. The Fox sisters were often examined, and no hoax was ever detected. One explanation held that the sisters caused the noises by cracking the joints of their limbs.^{[11](#)} But this would not explain the reputed content of their messages: the noises translated into plausible responses to questions beyond the understanding of the mediums. Indeed, some questions were not verbally stated, but were framed only mentally – if we are to believe the accounts of the time.

Many came forward as spiritualists. The familiar séance quickly developed, conducted by a single medium in a dimly-lit parlour containing only a few observers. Spectacular curiosities ensued: letters materialised in midair; musical instruments levitated and sounded; discarnate wraiths shook hands with their material visitors. Such events were reported across America, then internationally.

Historians characterise the peculiarity of modern spiritualism by emphasising its personal nature: mediums profess to convey messages from departed souls to their living friends and relatives. However, tribal shamans, presumably following very ancient traditions, also ‘call back’ the dead for conversation with their earthly survivors.¹² The great peculiarity of XIX-century spiritualism was its status as a *movement*.

P.B. Randolph: an American Rosicrucian

Paschal Beverly Randolph (1825-75) was the son of Flora Clark. His baptismal certificate (1832) gives his father's name as William Randon.¹³ But Randolph insisted that his father was one of the prestigious Randolphs of Virginia. If so, this man of privilege never married Flora Clark and did nothing to support their son. She was of mixed race and subsisted in the slums of New York City. P.B. Randolph was orphaned before the age of ten, raised by prostitutes and persecuted for his dark skin. He became a bootblack, a sailor, a dyer and a barber. At about the age of 25, he settled in upstate New York, where he advertised as a ‘clairvoyant physician’. By his account, he was friendly with Andrew Jackson Davis and belonged to Davis's Harmonial Brotherhood. He adopted Davis's theories of psychology and cosmology, and had his own vision of the primordial ‘Central Sun’. For the rest of his life, Randolph pursued independent studies in medicine, spiritualism and sexuality. Davis and Randolph justified free love as providing spiritual advancement. Randolph proved unfaithful as a lover, husband and father.

Randolph developed a concept that he called ‘blending’. It allows that a medium can mentally merge with other minds, incarnate or discarnate, as in a séance, but without the medium's loss of personal volition. This exemplifies Randolph's respect for will-power. ‘Try’ became one of his favourite mottoes. ‘Blending’ may have been inspired by passages in Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*: the hero's admirer, Viola Pisani, writes in her

private journal, 'It is my *spirit* that would blend itself with thine.'¹⁴ The book also maintains that the soul, 'by a religious magnetism', can blend and mingle with 'the energy of the Sublime Celestials'.¹⁵ Bulwer-Lytton credits this concept to the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus (*On the Mysteries*, [chapter 7](#), § 7).

Beginning in 1855, Randolph made trips to Europe and the Middle East. He met Lord Lytton and, supposedly, Éliphas Lévi.¹⁶ He later wrote a novel, *Ravalette*, which may incorporate his personal experiences: if so, he may have met prominent French figures, including Napoleon III. In *Ravalette* the emperor appears as a Rosicrucian. Randolph surely met Cahagnet and Baron Dupotet, for he carried letters of introduction addressed to them.¹⁷ He soon adopted their use of drugs and mirrors for astral communication, both clairvoyant and mediumistic. In Randolph's usage, the magic mirrors had to be 'magnetically charged', which probably meant the ritual application of seminal and vaginal fluids. For Randolph, orgasm also had magical importance as the most effective time for the adept to summon his Will and visualise the fulfilment of goals. This theory nicely suited Randolph's amorous nature and his casual treatment of marriage vows.

From various cities in the United States, Randolph published books that combined American spiritualism with Mesmerism and Old World magic. He recognised his key role in this development and began to distance himself from popular séances. He publicly marketed magic mirrors and hallucinogenic drugs, thus inviting general participation beyond that of specialised mediums and adepts. His ideas are well integrated in *After Death; or, Disembodied Man* (Boston, 1868). Randolph clearly replaces 'mediumship' with 'clairvoyance'. The latter is presented as preferable because it requires no surrender of consciousness or free will. Another comprehensive work is *Soul! The Soul World* (Boston, 1872). The first part largely reproduces his *Dealings with the Dead* (Utica, 1862), which had appeared first as a series of articles in a metaphysical journal, *The Banner of Light* (1859) in Boston. These Randolph had signed as *Le Rosicrucien*, implying an esoteric initiation in France.

While residing in Boston, Randolph acquired a patroness who established him in his 'Rosicrucian rooms' at 29 Boylston Street. He received clients with various needs – medical, psychological and spiritual. This brief period of prosperity ended tragically when the fire of 1872

devastated the city. Randolph moved to Toledo, Ohio, which was then a centre of political and social activism. In May 1873 he fell from a railroad bridge and suffered partial paralysis. Kate Corson, a young spiritualist, nursed him back to health. They discovered that his handicap disappeared during his 'blending' with spirits. He therefore continued his work as a visionary. Indeed, he resumed his travels, even when Kate presented him with a son.

Randolph was frustrated by his inability to organise a secret society that would practise his teachings. In the spring of 1874, in Tennessee, he founded the Provisional Lodge of Eulis. It lasted for fewer than four months before the erratic founder dissolved it. Randolph had already written 'Mysteries of Eulis', a treatise on sex magic for use by the Lodge. He later sought to assemble a coterie, this time in California. Disappointed, he returned to Toledo. He became despondent, believing that he had lost Kate's affection: on 29 July 1875 he shot himself with a revolver, and died on the spot.

Randolph's widow supplemented a meagre income by selling copies of his manuscripts. In the 1880s, her principal agent was Robert H. Fryar. He sold occultist books, magic mirrors and Tarots from his shop in Bath, England. The principal promoter of Randolph's occultist legacy was Reuben Swinburne Clymer (1878-1966). He conveyed 'Eulian' magic through a variety of publications and societies, and established a Rosicrucian Fraternity at Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

Emma Hardinge Britten, spiritualist and Rosicrucian

Born in 1823 in London's impoverished East End, Emma was the daughter of a seaman named Captain Floyd. Her father died in 1834 and her mother put her to work as a pianist. The girl demonstrated a gift for clairvoyance and joined a very exclusive occult circle, which she openly mentioned only under the fictitious name of 'The Orphic Society'. She named three other members: the fourth Earl Stanhope, Lieutenant Richard Morrison and Bulwer-Lytton.¹⁸ One of the members probably funded her education in music. She also served as a seer for independent patrons. One such was a member of the aristocratic Hardinge family, who forced her into a 'mystic marriage'. Emma understandably resented the abuse, and she never forgave the man; she exacted a sort of revenge by appropriating his family name. Another who, entirely honourably, acted as her patron on at

least one occasion, was Frederick Hockley, the friend of Earl Stanhope and chief beneficiary of the Crowned Angel of the Seventh Sphere.¹⁹

Emma Hardinge travelled to New York for a theatrical engagement in 1856 and spent most of the rest of her life in America. She discovered that her psychic abilities extended to spirit communication, and toured the US on the lecture circuit, attracting large audiences by her speeches, delivered both in and out of trances. In 1870 she married Dr William Britten, a Mesmeric healer. The couple settled in Boston. There Emma Hardinge Britten edited a short-lived monthly, *The Western Star*. Its major feature was a serialised story, *Ghost Land*. She called the author 'Austria', an admitted pseudonym for a German-speaking gentleman who had devoted 50 years to public service. He nevertheless lacked fluency in English, so she translated his French and German. The story is presented as the narrator's authentic biography, but this is doubtful (see [Chapter 3](#)). After a few issues, *The Western Star* fell victim to the same 1872 fire that drove Randolph from Boston; the Brittens resettled in New York. They were soon to encounter the redoubtable Mme Blavatsky and, with her, would become involved in the ongoing synthesis of the occult.

Mme Blavatsky, spiritualist, occultist, theosophist

Manifestations of modern occultism, from the 1880s onwards, have taken three major forms: spiritualism, magic in the Western tradition and theosophy based on ideas from Eastern religions. The three were closely entangled in this period. At the centre of all of them, at different stages in her career, was Mme Blavatsky. She was born Helena Petrovna von Hahn (1831-91) and belonged to an aristocratic family in Ekaterinoslav, Ukraine. She reportedly developed her talents as a clairvoyant, a Mesmerist and a psychic medium. In 1848 she married Nikifor Blavatsky, a vice-governor in Armenia, but soon parted from him.²⁰ During the following decade she travelled extensively, becoming well versed in the esoteric traditions of many cultures; but her itinerary is impossible to trace, given her contradictory testimony.

Among Mme Blavatsky's early tutors in esoterica is supposed to have been a certain Paulos Metamon. He is said to have been a Copt and to have met Mme Blavatsky in Egypt (or, in some accounts, a Chaldean who met her first in Turkey). One biographer seems to date the encounter as early as the 1840s: Mme Blavatsky reported working with Metamon for three

months; she cited an occasion in the desert when she longed for some French coffee, and Metamon instantly produced a cup of *café au lait* from an ordinary water-skin.²¹ Albert Leighton Rawson (1828-1902) knew Mme Blavatsky in Cairo when he was still an aspiring artist and scholar. (He later became a professional illustrator, world traveller and author with academic distinctions.) He describes Metamon as an opportunistic fortune-teller, rather than an exalted adept. Mme Blavatsky asked Metamon's advice about organising a spiritualist society; he advised her to wait.²²

Mme Blavatsky went several times to Paris. Her expertise in spiritualism and Freemasonry impressed her French counterparts. She is supposed to have cooperated with Victor Michal (1824-1889), a Mesmerist of the magical stripe, using mirrors and drugs: he found her an ideal subject, apparently assuming completely different personalities while entranced. He abandoned their collaboration, however, because she regularly became abusive at the end of each session.²³ At this time, Blavatsky became aware of the theories of another Mesmerist, Hippolyte-Léon Denizard Rivail (1804-69). As Allan Kardec, he wrote *Le Livre des Esprits* (*The Book of Spirits*, Paris, 1857). His research convinced him of the theory of reincarnation, but Mme Blavatsky was unimpressed. She came to believe it only in later years, when she had embraced Indian religions.

René Guénon (1888-1951) was an esoterist and a historian of esoteric societies. He wrote that around 1856 Mme Blavatsky allied herself with Giuseppe Mazzini, the Italian revolutionary who was then in permanent exile in London.²⁴ His followers may have venerated Cagliostro,²⁵ who had been condemned to prison by the Inquisition and was reputedly its last victim, dying in 1795. Among underground reformists, Cagliostro's opposition to Church and State made him a martyr. On 3 November 1867, so Mme Blavatsky said, she joined the revolutionaries at the fierce battle of Mentana, where she was wounded and permanently scarred. In 1871, she returned to Cairo and again found friends, old and new, who were political and spiritual rebels.²⁶ She revived her plan to create a Spiritualist Society (*Société Spirite*) in Cairo, although the effort failed after only two weeks. She blamed the irascibility and dishonesty of the Egyptian participants, but Guénon states that she was deserted when her own charlatanism was exposed.²⁷ The ruse allegedly involved the installation

of new wall coverings that concealed a fabric glove, designed to extend on silk threads and thus appear as the arm of a spirit materialising during a séance.²⁸ Mme Blavatsky left Egypt in 1872.

She visited her relatives, first in Russia and then in Paris. Having barely settled at the rue de l'Université, she received from the 'Brothers' an urgent command to go to New York.²⁹ Who these commanders were, whether they were in Paris or Cairo, in the Astral Light or in the woman's own imagination is not specified in the account.

Be that as it may, Blavatsky immediately complied and arrived in New York on 7 July 1873. In the next year she visited Chittenden, Vermont, in order to observe advertised manifestations of spirits. There she met another investigator, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907). He had been a Union colonel during the Civil War and then a New York lawyer and a newspaper columnist reporting on supernatural phenomena. He and Mme Blavatsky became fast friends and shared an apartment in Manhattan. Their relationship seems to have been strictly Platonic: both had suffered unhappy marriages and had separated from their respective spouses. Neither Mme Blavatsky nor Colonel Olcott had further expectations of romance; they were united in their love of esoteric mysteries. They visited prominent spiritualists in Philadelphia, and Mme Blavatsky excelled in her mediumship. She communed regularly with John King, a spirit identified in the séances of other mediums during the previous twenty years.

Mme Blavatsky told Colonel Olcott that she had been initiated by Brothers (also 'Masters') who, by paranormal means, were instructing her at a distance. Now she revealed that John King was not a departed soul, but a mischievous elemental. She declared that all the spirits in séances were of this low variety, explaining that she had only been humouring the spiritualists. Her secret mission was to wean them away from a belief in ghosts and provide the more substantial fare of Western esoterism. She assured Olcott that he too would receive directives from the Masters. She subsequently relayed official letters: sometimes Olcott found notes in unexpected places; or pages merely precipitated from the air. This suggests charlatanism by Mme Blavatsky. Still, she may also have received communications – perhaps via the normal postal service – from some secret society. Olcott's most attentive Master was 'Tuitit Bey',

described as a Copt and a member of the 'Egyptian part' of the Universal Mystic Brotherhood (elsewhere called the Great White Brotherhood).

Olcott credited his flatmate with command of elemental spirits, psychokinesis, astral projection, telepathy, clairvoyance and knowledge of 'the registry of the Astral Light'.³⁰ He also knew that she was a hypnotist. He does not seem to have worried about his own susceptibility, but perhaps his remarkable perceptions were illusions induced by hypnotic suggestion.

Early in 1875 Mme Blavatsky asked Olcott to prepare an advertisement for the founding of a new society. He asked her how the announcement should be signed. She told him to cite '*The Committee of Seven, THE BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR*'. This was presumably part of her mission to reform spiritualism by integrating it with occultism. The 'Seven' were apparently her Masters – if they existed. Olcott duly submitted his draft for her approval. She observed an amazing oddity: Olcott, with the initial letters of the six paragraphs of his text, had unconsciously spelt out the name TUITIT.³¹ Of course, the oddity is amazing only if Olcott's acrostic was composed unconsciously. In this episode it is possible that the usual roles were reversed, with Blavatsky as Olcott's dupe (though perhaps a willing dupe). Olcott soon received a showy document that assured him that he was under the surveillance of three mystical Masters. They encouraged him to TRY.

The Masters had borrowed Randolph's motto and apparently much else. Mme Blavatsky spoke of the 'Sleep of Sialam', the deep trance that Randolph recommended for delivering prophecies.³² Her views on reincarnation were precisely those of Randolph: it could occur only when the soul suffered abortion, death in infancy or mental retardation.³³ (Under these conditions, the soul deserves a second chance at a productive life on earth.) Randolph probably never met Mme Blavatsky, but he may have met Olcott; the men had investigated some of the same spiritualist mediums. In the last weeks of his life, Randolph wrote to Olcott and suggested the exchange of their latest books.³⁴ Even without this personal contact, of course, Mme Blavatsky and Olcott would have known of Randolph's published images, ideas and terminology.

When corresponding with Olcott, the Masters frequently urged him to tolerate and support Mme Blavatsky. They neglected doctrinal and magical teachings. Their most prominent allusions to a 'tradition' concern Mme Blavatsky's combat with *the dweller*; but this image is not Egyptian and is

no older than Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*.³⁵ For insights into Egyptian occultism, the aspiring magicians of New York were receiving instruction from a local inventor, George Henry Felt (1831-1906).³⁶ He had studied Egyptian art and believed that he had uncovered a canon of design that applied to ancient monuments, wall paintings and hieroglyphics, as well as astronomy and physiology.³⁷ He noticed that his dog and cat, whenever he was engaged in his studies, behaved strangely, as if reacting to invisible presences,³⁸ and concluded that he had found an Egyptian 'Kabbalah', a talismanic system able to evoke spirits. Felt hoped to impart his Egyptian lore to the Masons, but found them to be 'whisky-soaked and tobacco-sodden'. Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott invited Felt to their apartment at Irving Place where he could address his theories to enlightened visitors. He was scheduled to lecture on 'The Lost Canon of Proportions of the Egyptians' on 7 September 1875. The audience seemed uninspired about mathematical formulae – until Dr Pancoast, a medical doctor and Cabalist, asked if they could be used to summon spirits, and Felt affirmed this. Indeed, he offered to demonstrate. The group was excited, but the proof was forestalled when someone intervened to suggest that a society be formed for studying the phenomenon. The group met again in the next week and dubbed itself 'The Theosophical Society'. The name is credited to Charles Sotheran, a Freemason, a Rosicrucian, an author, a socialist and a disciple of Mazzini. Sotheran had recently left his native England and relocated in New York. The society developed by-laws and elected officers, with Olcott as President, Dr Pancoast and Felt as Vice-Presidents, Mme Blavatsky as Corresponding Secretary, Sotheran as Librarian, and William Quan Judge (a young clerk in Olcott's law office) as legal counsel; Emma Hardinge Britten was one of five Councillors.³⁹

George Felt's promises posed an early crisis for the Society. Olcott, in his inaugural address of 7 November, enthused that if Felt could cause spirits to materialise, he would bring lasting credit to Theosophy. 'What will the Spiritualists say, when through the column of saturated vapor flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom, in their blindness, they have in a thousand cases revered ... as the returning shades of relatives and friends [?]'.⁴⁰ Olcott's rhetoric must have offended the Britten and others. Meanwhile, Charles Sotheran was repulsed by the very demonology that Olcott welcomed.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the Society agreed to fund Felt with

\$100 for the 'requisite apparatus' that should render spirits visible; but by June 1876, Olcott and Judge were so dismayed at Felt's procrastination that they proceeded against him to recoup the Society's money. Emma Hardinge Britten was protective of him. The Society had become a secret order, and she said that outsiders should not condemn Felt on hearsay.⁴² This rather implies that outsiders should not regard Olcott's opinion as trustworthy. Felt resigned from the Society late in 1876 or early in 1877. He is thought to have left New York for a while. The Brotherhood of Luxor seems to have been entirely superseded by the Theosophical Society: in his 1995 book Peter Washington says that Felt went to London to found the Society for Occult Research, but nothing came of it.⁴³ If Felt made this trip, he was back in New York on 19 June 1878, for he then wrote from home to *The London Spiritualist* to give his account of unjust rejection by the Theosophical Society.⁴⁴ He insisted that his evocations had actually succeeded in the presence of the Society's higher officials.

In 1876 the Brittens published in Boston a book-length development of *Ghost Land*, and, in New York, another book, *Art Magic*, supposedly by the same author. *Art Magic* is a comprehensive survey of esoteric traditions. *Ghost Land* purports to chronicle the youth of an adept, well educated and well travelled. His name, now, was not 'Austria', but 'Chevalier Louis de B____', and his residence was in Havana.

Art Magic; or, *Mundane, Sub-Mundane and Super-Mundane Spiritism* draws heavily on Hargrave Jennings, author of *The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries* (London, 1870), to demonstrate the essential importance of phallism in early religion. *Art Magic* tries to trace the history of this religion and its supposed merger with the adoration of fertility in another form, namely the sun. Phallic and solar symbols immediately recall Randolph's sexual rituals and celestial visions.

Art Magic offers a cosmology, a theory of spirituality and a basis for occult activity. God exists as a central sun generating human souls and entire worlds. The souls pass through a prolonged hierarchy of worlds. Each human has had prenatal experiences in forgotten worlds and will progress to others after death. The dead therefore endure as intelligent beings, but spiritualists are mistaken in not recognising other spirits - higher ones, such as angels, and lower ones, such as elementals. All the powers possessed by discarnate spirits can be developed by humans while still in the body. Inherent in the body is the astral fluid, a 'magnetic fire'

that pervades our universe. The essential quality of the Godhead is Will, and by Will the individual can control the astral fluid. Through its agency, human spirits can converse with those elsewhere in the hierarchy. Practical methods include Mesmeric trance, drug-induced visions, ceremonial magic and clairvoyance through special crystals and mirrors. The author gives Cahagnet's method for 'charging' a magic mirror. *Art Magic* mentions modern Theosophy as being inferior to the ancient variety:⁴⁵ Louis de B_____ must have been close to Mme Blavatsky but rather ill disposed towards her latest project. We now have a possible recipe for the ingredients in *Art Magic*. Louis seems to have imbibed the heady brew of ideas from P.B. Randolph. The only extra ingredient here is the emphasis on the elementals, which could have been introduced by the new vogue exemplified by George Felt's Egyptian demonology. Mme Blavatsky, however, persuaded Olcott that *Art Magic* derived entirely from her own teachings. Emma Hardinge Britten was so exasperated that she threatened legal action and stated publicly that the book owed nothing to anyone in the Theosophical Society.⁴⁶

According to *Ghost Land*, the author was born in Hindustan. His father, an exiled Hungarian noble, sent Louis de B_____ to Europe for his education. He is mentored by a magus, Professor Marx, and they belong to secret societies including the Orphic Circle, the very group to which the young Emma Hardinge had belonged. Louis is introduced to scrying, astral projection, apparitions, clairvoyance and telepathy. When Marx dies, Louis's identity is submerged by the ghost of the professor.⁴⁷ Louis painfully regains his own faculties, and attains to adeptship. The narrative is interrupted by a long interpolation, pages from the diary of his older friend, John Cavendish Dudley, secretary of the Orphic Circle. Louis returns to India, which is unconvincingly described. The end of the story descends into a melodrama in which Louis ultimately marries Dudley's daughter, and they contend with an evil sorceress, Helene Laval. She seems an unkind parody of Helena Blavatsky:⁴⁸ although Mme Blavatsky claimed to subject elementals to her will, she mistrusted the use of ritual magic; so the portrayal of her as a sorceress would have been offensive to her. As an added touch, the sorceress Helene is elegant and svelte; Mme Blavatsky was plain and stout. The author would again seem to have been an acquaintance and a detractor of Mme Blavatsky's.

One nominee as the ‘Chevalier Louis de B___’ is Baron Josef Heinrich Ludwig Karl von Palm (more often called Joseph Henry Louis Charles de Palm).⁴⁹ De Palm (1809-76) was a Bavarian noble who had once enjoyed access to the royal courts of Europe. But his debts, debauchery and fraud had ruined his reputation. Already an ex-convict, he fled to America to escape further charges, and by the time that *Ghost Land* was serialised, he was an ailing indigent in New York City. Mme Blavatsky befriended him, and he joined the Theosophical Society (and possibly the Brotherhood of Luxor). She and Olcott took the suffering de Palm into their personal care, but he soon died, on 20 May 1876.

Baron de Palm became more famous in death than in life. He received an unconventional funeral reflecting his interest in pre-Christian religions; the ritual scandalised mainstream religionists in New York. Olcott and Mrs Britten delivered eulogies. The colonel, executor of the baron's estate, arranged for the body's cremation, as de Palm had requested. This was not permissible in New York, however, and Olcott had to travel as far as western Pennsylvania to supervise the cremation at a private facility, apparently the first in the country.⁵⁰ The Theosophical Society was the baron's legal beneficiary. Of course his European wealth no longer existed; among his personal possessions, Olcott found only a few useful items, namely his own shirts, which de Palm had filched and relieved of Olcott's monogram. Olcott and Mme Blavatsky were clearly charitable and tolerant toward de Palm, and it seems unlikely that he would have been so ungrateful as to have satirised Mme Blavatsky as Helene Laval in the last pages of *Ghost Land*.

Moreover, the life of de Palm does not agree with the ‘autobiography’ in *Ghost Land*. Louis would have been born c. 1825,⁵¹ but de Palm was born in 1809. Louis was supposed to have been living in Havana in 1876, when his books came out, but de Palm had died in the spring. He had not been engaged in ambitious writing projects while on his deathbed; in fact he lacked discursive ability and intellectual acumen, according to Olcott.⁵² And, by Emma Hardinge Britten's own testimony, Colonel Olcott and Mme Blavatsky never met the mysterious Louis.⁵³

Olcott and Mme Blavatsky believed - plausibly - that the real Louis was Emma Hardinge Britten herself. She was quite capable of satirising Mme Blavatsky. *Ghost Land* also refers to a crowned angel⁵⁴ and the seventh

sphere,⁵⁵ placing both images in unfavourable contexts. The references are to that particular spirit identified by Frederick Hockley, the Englishman who had once employed the young Emma as a scryer. She apparently harboured some resentment towards him and vented it in *Ghost Land*. She was certainly untruthful when she pretended that her narrative was first written primarily in German (by an author purportedly educated in Austria). The book uses the phrase 'Döppel Ganger' for 'Doppelgänger', an unlikely mistake for a German-speaking adept.⁵⁶ Similarly, both Louis and Dudley write about the mischievous spirit called a poltergeist, but which the book calls 'Polter Gheist'.⁵⁷ Britten was prone to this very mistake.⁵⁸ She sometimes invented words, such as 'revelator' and 'revelating':⁵⁹ and these invented words are found not only in her 'translation' of Louis's story, but also in the journal that she attributes to the Englishman, Dudley. All the writings are undoubtedly hers.

Art Magic likewise suffers from its author's ignorance of German. It omits the wide range of German authorities, except for a few whose works had been translated into English.⁶⁰ *Art Magic* lamely explains this failing, 'It would be as useless as impertinent to cite German literature in support of Spiritualist doctrines ...'⁶¹

Mme Blavatsky soon published her own first book, *Isis Unveiled* (New York, 1877), an occultist compendium. It is clearly a pastiche dependent on many earlier works, which Blavatsky generally fails to credit. Local newspapers, most notably the *New York Sun*, stigmatised her 'secret Masters' as creatures of fantasy, inspired by papers left by Baron de Palm; the *Sun* further dismissed her teachings as merely rehashing Éliphas Lévi's publications.⁶² Perhaps Mme Blavatsky did acquire de Palm's clippings or notes (not necessarily authored by him); and perhaps she did decide to develop them into an entire book. But surely her debt to de Palm was negligible, especially since her ideas were as common as Lévi's and Randolph's.

In 1878 Mme Blavatsky became a naturalised citizen of the United States. However, she and Olcott, supposedly under orders from the Masters, suddenly arranged a move to India. The historian Guénon claims that Blavatsky and Olcott did not depart voluntarily. He says that they were no longer welcome in the Brotherhood of Luxor: that both had been excommunicated.⁶³ The partners hastily placed their household goods on

the auction block. Mme Blavatsky made an odd note in Olcott's diary: 'All our things went for a song, as they say in America ... *Everything gone: Baron de Palm, adieu!*'⁶⁴ She did not salute neighbours, publishers or Theosophical officers, but favoured a renegade who had been dead for more than two and a half years. One historian suggests that de Palm had, in fact, left Mme Blavatsky a bequest - money enough to finance her flight.⁶⁵ She did not sell everything and did not abandon the leftovers; she packed 'the cuckoo clock, the stuffed owl, the serpent, all her secret props ...'⁶⁶ As for Olcott, he left behind an estranged wife and sons.⁶⁷

The travellers set sail in the depths of winter. They were bound for Bombay, where they had friends in the Arya Samaj, a new group of Vedic reformers whose beliefs seemed compatible with Theosophy. The Society would now emphasise Indian religion over Rosicrucianism and Egyptian Hermetism. When the ship entered the Suez Canal, Colonel Olcott received greetings from Tuitit, who was nearby.⁶⁸ If, as seems likely, Olcott and Mme Blavatsky were formally expelled from the Brotherhood of Luxor, the Masters were apparently unperturbed. Olcott does not seem to have been offended that Tuitit did not exert himself to reach the ship and personally greet his most famous students on their most momentous voyage. By the same token, the travellers did not bother to make the short detour to visit the Masters.

Barlet, Theosophist and Tarotist

The Theosophical Society had no special doctrine regarding the Tarot. However, one Frenchman in the Society, Albert Faucheux (1838-1921), a civil servant, gave the trumps a Theosophical twist. When writing on the occult, he called himself François-Charles Barlet (the surname being an anagram of Albert).⁶⁹ An essay by Barlet appears in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (*The Tarot of the Bohemians*, Paris, 1889), an influential book by Papus (1865-1916), the most prominent French Tarotist who continued Éliphas Lévi's efforts to amalgamate all occult traditions.⁷⁰ Papus had joined the Theosophical Society too, but its influence on *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* is discernible only in Barlet's contribution.

The unifying theme here is the Theosophical paradigm of Nature's movement along two arcs. Involution proceeds toward the pole of matter,

evolution toward the pole of spirit. Evolution is the stronger movement, and individual psyches oppose it at their peril.⁷¹

Barlet argues that the ancients recognised the universal processes of involution and evolution, and expressed them in the *Twenty-two Great Arcana*, i.e. the Tarot trumps. (Barlet avoids using card-players' terms.) The same Arcana offer a course of instruction for the neophyte aspiring to a personal ascent of the spirit. Arcana I to X depict the downward course, the involution of spirit in matter. The neophyte's enlightenment begins with the experience symbolised in Arcanum XI. This trump, along with XII and XIII, supposedly recapitulates the descending arc; the remaining trumps express stages of spiritual elevation. The Tarot's role in an initiatory rite derives from Paul Christian's fanciful *Historie da la magie* (*History of Magic*, Paris, 1870). Here follows a condensed version of Barlet's system.

Trump name	key terms	subjects studied
XI Strength	universal Force	cosmic polarities
XII The Great Work	sacrifice, change	alchemy
XIII Death	Elementals, disorganisation	necromancy
XIV The two Urns	astral currents	the planetary aura
XV Typhon	Dragon of the Threshold	ecstasy & madness
XVI Tower	baptism of fire	therapeutics
XVII Star of the Magi	planets & influences	astrology
XVIII Twilight	beyond the zodiac	intelligible world
XIX Resplendent light	spiritual sun	divine world
XX Awakening of the Dead	new earths & heavens	divine hierarchies
[XXI Fool]		
XXII Crown of the Magi	rest	Nirvana

Barlet has borrowed the names of his Arcana from Christian. The noble nature of the Hanged Man (XII) goes back to Lévi, as does the interpolation of the Fool as Arcanum XXI (which Barlet omits in the present context). The 'Dragon of the Threshold' is a variation on Bulwer-Lytton's 'Dweller of the Threshold'. 'Nirvana' is a goal adopted by Mme Blavatsky and derives from religions indigenous to India.

Both Papus and Barlet became convinced that Blavatsky was a charlatan, and both withdrew from the Theosophical Society. Barlet became the friend and teacher of René Guénon, whom we will cite further, in [Chapter 3](#).

CHAPTER 2

British Beneficiaries

Cautious Rosicrucians

The first weak impulse towards a general British revival of esoterism within Freemasonry was due to a body that called itself the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, referred to as the 'Soc. Ros.' or, more respectfully, S.R.I.A. It was founded in London in June 1867 by Robert Wentworth Little (1840-78) as a counterpart of the Scottish Rosicrucian Society into which, with his friend W.J. Hughan, he had been initiated on 31 December 1866.¹ The Scottish society, centred in Edinburgh, was headed by Anthony O'Neal Haye, and was not confined to Masons; it appears to have been in existence since 1857 or earlier.² By contrast, membership in the S.R.I.A. was restricted to Freemasons. The members for this reason were exclusively male; they originally addressed one another as 'Brother', but soon began to use the Latin form 'Frater'. After a time the S.R.I.A. formed branches in other cities; these were known as Colleges, that in London being the Metropolitan College. Little was its Supreme Magus until his early death in 1878. Lord Lytton was elected an Honorary Member in 1870, largely on account of the 'Rosicrucian' themes in some of his novels. He was nominated Grand Patron, a courtesy he declined, resigning even his membership in 1872.³

Robert Little had reputedly been a student of Lévi's writings. In fact, however, the S.R.I.A. was not greatly influenced by the French occultist. In 1870, one of its members, William Carpenter (1797-1874), wrote in the Society's journal, *The Rosicrucian*, that the 'the works of Éliphas Lévi on Magique ... are, I believe, very little known, even among the members of our mystic and secret orders'.⁴ The immediate spiritual ancestry of the S.R.I.A. was German rather than French. It was organised into the same nine grades as the Scottish society had been, divided, as in the Scottish society, into three Orders.⁵ The four lowest grades formed the First Order: Zelator; Theoricus; Practicus; and Philosophus. The next three constituted

the Second Order: Adeptus Minor; Adeptus Major; and Adeptus Exemptus. The Third Order comprised just two grades: Magister Templi and Magus. This nine-grade system was borrowed from the German Rosicrucian society to which Mesmer had belonged, the Sublime, Most Ancient, Genuine and Honourable Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross.⁶ This Society, taking its name from an earlier one, was probably founded in 1757 and finally petered out in the 1790s. It claimed to be the highest level of Freemasonry; only those who had attained the first three grades of orthodox Masonry could join. Its organisation was very secret indeed, each circle consisting of no more than nine members, so that no member could betray more than a very few others; and its members held a strong belief in 'Unknown Superiors' (*unbekannte Obern*) who guided it. It engaged in complex rituals; all the brothers received special Brotherhood names, which were changed every three years. It concentrated on alchemy, but paid close attention to the Cabala as well; its instructions for the Adeptus Minor grade included a diagram of a crowned figure surmounting the Tree of Life, the *sephiroth* corresponding to stages in an alchemical operation.⁷ It was conservative in outlook, and was influential in promoting reactionary political policies. A document of 1761 shows it to have been organised into seven grades; one of 1767 is the first to list the nine grades borrowed by the S.R.I.A. (though the title of the lowest grade was 'Junior' rather than 'Zelator').⁸ The nine grades were listed by Paul Christian in his *Histoire de la magie* of 1870.⁹

Those in the S.R.I.A. felt a kinship with earlier German Rosicrucians, who were political activists, but the British body had no political intentions; nor did it engage in alchemy or practical magic of any kind. Its members, who had each to adopt a Latin motto as his name in the Society, enjoyed taking part in the rites for admitting new members to the various grades; apart from this, they did little more than attend dinners and listen to lectures on occultism. Thus William Carpenter described the aim of the Society as 'purely literary and antiquarian'.¹⁰ Both he and Kenneth Mackenzie, together with another member, Albert Mackey, stigmatised the legend of Christian Rosenkreutz – the supposed founder of the original Rosicrucian Brotherhood, who was alleged to have lived from 1378 to 1484 – as a fiction.¹¹

The Fratres Lucis

Several members of the S.R.I.A. were interested in scrying (crystal-gazing). Most members were not themselves scryers, but employed others who claimed to be such. Frederick Hockley (1809-85) regarded scrying as a Rosicrucian practice. He was an accountant, but well known in occult circles for his extensive library on esoterism. His wife, a spiritualist, died in 1850; and he persistently tried to contact her beyond the grave. Hockley is therefore typical of the occultists emerging after 1850: he studied esoteric philosophy, practical magic and psychic mediumship. (We have seen that he named the juvenile Emma Hardinge among his scryers.) Hockley's enthusiasm for occultism did not blind him to its impostures: he criticised Helena Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* as a derivative mess. Hockley was friendly with Captain Francis G. Irwin (1828-93) and his son Herbert. The elder Irwin was another member of the S.R.I.A., and he pursued scrying with Herbert as the seer. From 31 October to 9 November of 1873, Herbert allegedly received messages from a spirit identified as 'C', taken to be Cagliostro. The spirit professed membership in an esoteric society, the *Fratres Lucis* (Brothers of Light), and he recounted its history. The *Fratres Lucis* had existed in Germany in the late XVII century.¹² According to 'Cagliostro', however, the brotherhood had begun in Renaissance Florence, and one of its early members was Marsilio Ficino. Robert Fludd, the Comte de Saint-Germain, Swedenborg and Mesmer were cited as later initiates.

Alternative names for the group were 'Brotherhood of the Cross of Light' and 'Order of the Suastica'.¹³ The 'Cross of Light' was a symbol of mystical enlightenment quite independent of Christian iconography, and the 'suastica' had not yet been appropriated by Aryan supremacists. Both emblems were solar symbols to XIX-century occultists. The swastika in this context can be traced to Lieutenant Richard J. Morrison, better known as the astrologer Zadkiel. In his almanac for 1870, Morrison announced his intention to revive 'The Most Ancient Order of the Suastica; or, The Brotherhood of the Mystic Cross.' He asserted that the original Order had been founded in Tibet in 1027 BC.¹⁴ Kenneth Mackenzie recalled Frederick Hockley's references to Morrison's society as 'The Order of the Swash-tub'.¹⁵ All three men, along with the Irwins, emblazoned the swastika on various belongings.¹⁶ Mackenzie's *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (1877) includes an entry for the 'Most Ancient Order of the Suastica, or Brotherhood of the Mystic Cross'.

In 1874, Irwin made a trip to Paris and returned with the claim that he had made favourable contact with the European Fratres Lucis.¹⁷ He founded a British branch of the Order and initiated his son Herbert and a few friends, including Mackenzie, Hockley, Charles Sotheran and Benjamin Cox, who was a Freemason and a crystal-gazer. This small group also received an entry in Mackenzie's *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*. Young Herbert, who had never been healthy, died in 1879; thus the group lost its premier scribe.

The Society of Eight

Frederick Holland was a member of the S.R.I.A. In 1883, he founded the Society of Eight. His inductees are usually given as F.G. Irwin, Cox, Hockley, Mackenzie, Yarker, William Wynn Westcott, who was a medical doctor, and the Reverend W.A. Ayton, who was an Anglican clergyman.¹⁸ The circle was especially interested in alchemy and possibly ceremonial magic. When Irwin was inducted, he received from Mackenzie a congratulatory letter that emphasised the prospect of real work in the new Society: 'It is by no means Little's foolish Rosic[rucian] Society. We are *practical* and not visionary and we are not degree mongers. *That* nonsense is played out.'¹⁹ Frederick Hockley died on 10 November 1885. There is a suggestion that his place in the circle was taken by Samuel Liddell Mathers, yet another member of the S.R.I.A.²⁰ However, his direct involvement must have been short-lived. On 20 November 1885, Mackenzie sent Irwin a notice: 'Society of Eight quite dormant thro' Holland's fault'.²¹

The Society of Eight, as a group, did not study the Tarot; but several members were keenly interested in it.²² Holland, Westcott and Mathers would write about it. Mackenzie planned to write about it.

Kenneth Mackenzie, an English disciple of Lévi

Despite Lévi's two visits to England, the English esoteric movement was not much influenced by his teachings until the 1880s, and until then, the Tarot played no part in it. Before that time only two men were familiar with Lévi's work, William Carpenter and Kenneth Mackenzie; but the former was of insufficient stature, and the latter too eccentric, to make any great impact. Carpenter, who had cited Lévi's writings in an article in *The*

Rosicrucian, mentioned the Tarot briefly in another article in the same journal: ‘... the Book of Thoth ... is supposed by Count [sic] de Gébelin to be preserved in a pack of cards called Tarot ... Here is wisdom; let him who can, give himself to the study of it. For my part, I could have no hope of penetrating the mysteries; ... the learned Eteilla [sic] devoted 30 years to the study of them, and then gave up in despair.’²³

Kenneth Robert Henderson Mackenzie (1833-86) carried his researches further than Carpenter. He had an extraordinary career. He began as a precociously brilliant scholar. Born on 31 October 1833 at Deptford in south-east London, he was the son of a medical doctor; from 1834 his father, Dr Rowland Hill Mackenzie, held a hospital appointment in Vienna, where Kenneth Mackenzie was educated, although his parents returned home in 1841. He followed in January 1851 and settled permanently in London. He sent erudite contributions to the journal *Notes and Queries*, and in 1852, aged 19, he published a translation of the archaeologist K.R. Lepsius's *Briefe aus Aegypten, Aethiopen und der Halbinsel des Sinai geschrieben in den Jahren 1841-5* (Berlin, 1852), and in 1853 a book on *Burmah and the Burmese*, as well as assisting W.S. Landor with his *Imaginary Conversations*; by 1860 he had written, edited or translated some seven books. In about 1857 his parents began living apart, Kenneth's mother staying with him, while his father moved to Paris. In October 1858 the young Mackenzie founded *The Biological Review*, of which four issues were published; the journal was devoted to Mesmerism, homeopathy and the like - a first indication of his unorthodox inclinations. In January 1854 he was elected, at a surprisingly early age, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, although he ceased to be one in 1870 owing to his failure to pay his dues; from 1855 to 1861 he was also a member of the Royal Asiatic Society. In 1864, he joined the Anthropological Society of London, in which he was active until 1870.

By the 1860s Mackenzie's scholarly career was dwindling to its close: he had developed a fascination with the occult, to which he devoted most of the rest of his life. In 1861 he paid a visit to Éliphas Lévi in Paris and discussed with him, among many other subjects, ‘the occult game of Tarot’, in which he said he had been interested for some time; probably his interest had been aroused by Lévi's books.²⁴ Mackenzie's teacher in occult matters was Frederick Hockley, to whom Mackenzie reported when he returned from the visit to Lévi.

Westcott stated in 1900 that Robert Little had been assisted by Kenneth Mackenzie in founding the S.R.I.A.; Westcott claimed that Mackenzie had been initiated into a Rosicrucian brotherhood by German adepts. Westcott was far from being a truthful man, and both parts of the story are certainly false.²⁵ Mackenzie became a Freemason only in 1870, and so was not qualified to join the S.R.I.A. before that date; he would hardly have helped to introduce a qualification which he could not meet himself.²⁶ In 1872 he married Alexandria Aydon, the daughter of a civil engineer. In the same year, Little persuaded him to accept honorary membership of the S.R.I.A, and he was admitted to the Zelator grade in October. But early in 1873 Hockley, exasperated by Mackenzie's heavy drinking, and outraged by a letter in which he had 'grossly insulted' him, refused further communication with him.²⁷ Mackenzie remained desolated by the breach.

Mackenzie gave frequent lectures to the members of the S.R.I.A, including one in April 1873 concerning his visit to Lévi; the lecture was published in the Society's journal,²⁸ and Lévi was elected an Honorary Foreign Member. From 1874 to 1875 Mackenzie was the Assistant Secretary of the Society. In June 1875 he resigned his membership of the S.R.I.A, having quarrelled with Little, and also being nervous of encountering Hockley, who was transferring from the Bristol College to the Metropolitan one. In November 1878 the two were reconciled; the initiative was Hockley's, probably at the instigation of his friend F.G. Irwin. In 1875 Mackenzie helped a Captain J.H.L. Archer found the Royal Oriental Order of Sikha and the Sat B'hai, a fringe Masonic group with pretensions to Indian inspiration; Mackenzie composed some rituals for it. In 1886, Benjamin Cox, drawing up a huge list of subjects to be studied by the Sat B'hai, included as the last of them 'the Tarot, Exoteric and Esoteric'.²⁹

By 1879 Mackenzie had formed his intention of writing the book entitled *The Game of Tarot: Archaeologically and Symbolically Considered*³⁰ His plans for the book were substantial enough that the publisher, Trübner and Co., issued a prospectus for it; there were to be 78 illustrations in a separate case - a complete Tarot pack, in other words. The prospectus stated that the book 'will contain researches into ... the earliest systems of divination by symbolical cards'; but the book never appeared. Lévi died in 1875, and in 1877, Mackenzie wrote to Irwin, then Chief Adept of the Bristol College of the S.R.I.A, that he could not answer the

Reverend Ayton's question as to whether Lévi 'left any exact instructions behind him for the working of the Tarot', but added, 'I have a fashion of working it myself but I work it with the aid of astrology ... My general instructions are those of Aliette [sic] which are tinged with cartomancy - but for the latter I much prefer an Italian process by which I have had marvellous results'.³¹ Two years later he wrote to Westcott that he had been 'worried' by the Reverend Ayton, Robert Fryar and John Yarker about 'the *Real Tarot*', but observed, 'I am not disposed to communicate the Tarot system indiscriminately although I am acquainted with it. To do so would put a most dangerous weapon into the hands of persons less scrupulous than I am'.³² By December 1885 he had abandoned all intention to write a book on the Tarot, telling Westcott in a letter, 'I am not at present writing about the Tarot. It was a projected work some years ago and fell through. I may perhaps resume it some day ... The subject is terribly intricate and I have not the same means of literary command I formerly possessed'.³³ He added that he had given 'Bro. Mathers' (S.L. Mathers) a prospectus of the book.³⁴ An important effect of Mackenzie's interest in the Tarot was to arouse that of Westcott in the subject.

By the 1870s, Mackenzie had transformed himself from a scholar into an obsessive dabbler in fringe Masonic rites, a boaster and a liar; in an often quoted sentence, A.E. Waite wrote of him that 'on Rosicrucian subjects at least the record of Kenneth Mackenzie is one of recurring mendacity'.³⁵ From 1875 to 1877 he issued in six parts *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* that he had edited; it contained a great deal about fringe rites and about occult societies with claims to be Masonic. It was a failure, being overshadowed by the *Encyclopaedia* published by Woodford in 1878, which had the advantage of a respected editor and a competent publisher. Mackenzie also became involved with another fringe Masonic body, the Swedenborgian Rite, which John Yarker had imported from Canada to England in 1876; Yarker was Supreme Grand Master and F.G. Irwin Supreme Grand Warden. In 1877, Kenneth Mackenzie became Supreme Grand Secretary. Westcott apparently did not detect Mackenzie's recurring mendacity when, in a letter of 1881, Mackenzie claimed to possess the real Rosicrucian degrees, although he could not reveal them to anyone. No evidence connects him to any Rosicrucian group with an ancient pedigree. He died at Twickenham on 3 July 1886.

A.E. Waite and *The Mysteries of Magic*

In England, the first English-language publication on the occult Tarot was A.E. Waite's translation of a selection from the writings of Éliphas Lévi. It was published in London in 1886 under the title *The Mysteries of Magic*, with an introductory essay by Waite. Included in the selection was an extensive section dealing with the Tarot, taken largely from Lévi's *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (Paris, 1856). This last book was the fountainhead of modern occultist theories of the Tarot; through Waite's selection, English-speaking readers unable or unwilling to read Lévi's originals could study his work for the first time. It had accordingly a great impact upon students of the occult.

Frederick Holland and his Cabalistic Tarot

The origins of Frederick Holland (1854-1917) are obscure. He was probably born in Birmingham and thus could well be the Frederick Holland who was the son of William Holland, described on the birth certificate as a tool maker, and Sarah Holland, née Ellis. Frederick was described by Kenneth Mackenzie as 'a technically experienced chymist and metallurgist'; the word 'metallurgist' doubtless refers to his profession, but 'chymist' may allude to his private pursuit of alchemy. In his early twenties, he moved to Bournemouth, where he lived at Inglewood Villas, Westbourne. There, Holland came to know Mathers, and according to Westcott, gave Mathers his first instruction in the Cabala. Mathers persuaded Holland to become a Freemason, and in October 1881 proposed him as a member of the Hengist Lodge; he was initiated on 3 November. He and Mathers joined the S.R.I.A. at the same time, in 1882. The Society of Eight was formed the next year.

Holland drew a Tarot for his own purposes, and it is preserved in a private collection. His design is approximately what might have resulted if Lévi had been correct in his theory that the Tarot was invented by Cabalists. Holland rendered no pictures. Each of the 22 trump cards is designated by a large Hebrew letter, placed centrally and surrounded on four sides by inscriptions, mostly in English. In the sampling that follows, all terms are Holland's; they depend greatly on Éliphas Lévi.

	Hebrew letters	Esoteric trumps	Some titles after Lévi	correspondences after Lévi
1	<i>Aleph</i>	The producer of Existance [sic]	God or Man	first principle
2	<i>Beth</i>	The woman	Gnosis	Moon
3	<i>Gimel</i>	The triangle of Solomon	Fecundity	Venus
4	<i>Dalet</i>	King of Kings	The cubical stone	Jupiter
5	<i>He</i>	Spirit & Matter	Religion	Aries
6	<i>Vau</i>	embracing	Good & Evil	Taurus
7	<i>Zain</i>	emancipation	The Flaming Sword	Gemini
8	<i>Heth</i>	Spirit of Dispute	Justice	Cancer
9	<i>Teth</i>	Hermit	Prudence	Leo
10	<i>Yod</i>	wheel of Ezekiel	paternal scepter	The Virgin
11	<i>Kaph</i>	Duty to defend	Hand in the act of taking	Venus [sic] (Lévi has Mars)
12	<i>Lamed</i>	The Crucifixion	The Great Work	The Balances
13	<i>Mem</i>	Spirit/Marriage	regeneration	second principle
14	<i>Nun</i>	Temperatures	Transmutations	Scorpio
15	<i>Samekh</i>	The Devil	Baphometus	Sagittarius
16	<i>Ayin</i>	The Temple Rebuilt	Tower of Babel	Capricorn
17	<i>Pe</i>	immortality	The blazing star	Mercury
18	<i>Tzaddi</i>	Dew	The reflected light	Aquarius
19	<i>Qoph</i>	The Prince of Heaven	Sol – aurum	Pisces
20	<i>Resh</i>	Ressurrection [sic]	Circulus	Saturn
21	<i>Shin</i>	The Fool	the sensual	third principle
22	<i>Tau</i>	Truth	all in all	The Sun

The above ‘principles’, of course, are the elements of air, water and fire. Fire devolves on the Fool, which Lévi inserted between trumps 20 and 22 (normally 21). The latter, the World, is required to serve as the Sun because of the exigencies of the artificial scheme that Lévi extracted from the *Sepher Yetzirah* and imposed on the Tarot.

Holland's suit cards are even more imaginative than his trumps. The four suits do not acknowledge Cups, Coins, Swords or Batons. He relies directly on their esoteric equivalents (according to Lévi), namely the letters of the Tetragrammaton: *Yod*, *He*, *Vau* and *He*. Holland distinguishes the second *He* by a punctuation point within the letter. The letters are used as suit-signs; they identify hierarchies from 1 to 10, for a total of 40 numeral cards; no court cards are in evidence. The suit-signs are disposed exactly as are the pips throughout standard playing cards of the Anglo-American pattern. Holland again places inscriptions along his cards’ four margins. The numeral cards of a given rank always have the same data along their vertical edges. Holland probably understood the meanings as modified by contexts for each suit. These lateral inscriptions deal with five themes, apparently reflecting the Cabalistic realms of *Atziluth* (Emanation), *Briah* (Creation), *Yetzirah* (Formation) and *Assiah*

(Manifestation) plus the degraded realm of the *Qlippoth* (failed Creations). In the following summary, the inscriptions on the right are as given by Holland; those on the left he wrote in Hebrew, but they are transliterated here.

LEFT				RIGHT	
	<i>Atziluth</i>	<i>Briah</i>	<i>Yetzirah</i>	<i>Assiah</i>	<i>Qlippoth</i>
	Sephiroth	Divine Names	Angels	Organs	Demons
1	Kether	EHEIEH	Chayoth	Head	False gods
2	Chochmah	YAH	Ophanim	Brains	Lying spirits
3	Binah	YHVH	Aralim	Heart	Vessels of iniquity
4	Chesed	EL	Chashmelim	Right arm	Revengers of wickedness
5	Pachad	ELOH	Seraphim	Left arm	Juglers [sic]
6	Tiphareth	ELOHIM	Shinanim	Chest	Aery powers
7	Netzach	YHVH TZABAOTH	Tarshishim	Right leg	Furies
8	Hod	ELOHIM TZABAOTH	Beni Elohim	Left leg	Sifters
9	Yesod	ELOHI	Eshim	Genital area	Tempters
10	Malkuth	[<i>Basileia</i>]	[Shechinah]	Union of the whole body	Wicked souls bearing rule

The 10s boast the only Greek term here, *Basileia*, meaning ‘Kingdom’. That level lacks an angelic choir but accommodates the Shekinah, i.e. God's presence among the faithful on earth. In Agrippa's *De Occulta philosophia*, a ‘Scale of Ten’ presents parallel lists of divine names, *sephiroth*, angelic orders, body parts and infernal orders (with ten celestial spheres and ten ‘consecrated animals’ as well).³⁶ Holland's choices vary from Agrippa's, but the two authors present identical lists for the evil powers. Holland's list of ‘organs’ clearly relates to the *sephiroth*: ‘Head’ recalls the highest *sephira* as ‘Crown’; ‘Brains’ and ‘Heart’ respectively link with the *sephiroth* of ‘Wisdom’ and ‘Understanding’. The limbs and torso conform to the ‘anatomy’ of the Tree of Life, as in the early Cabala.

The tops and bottoms of Holland's suit cards have inscriptions too. These are *Adonai* and *Kerubim* on all the 10s. On the other 36 numeral cards, the top and bottom inscriptions are distinctive, and each includes an Arabic numeral (the bottom number exceeds the top number by a value of one): a continuous sequence, 1-72, ascends the hierarchy of card ranks and proceeds along the expected order of suits: *Yod*, *He*, *Vau*, *He*. Below each Arabic numeral is a name in Hebrew and, below that, a word in Latin. The Hebrew expresses the angels of the *Shem ha-Mephoresch*. Each of its 72

component roots was identified as the name of an angel.³⁷ The Cabalists, in examining the Book of Psalms, were able to find 72 passages containing the same roots. The theme of such a passage was thought to hint at the nature of the related angel. For instance, the root VHV (*Vau, He, Vau*) generates the first angelic name, Vahaviah, and is also found in Psalm 3:4 (in the Vulgate), where the psalmist's head is upraised (*exaltans*). Holland therefore wrote 'exaltator' beneath 'Vahaviah' on the *Yod Ace*. He only faltered at the end of the system. He correctly named angel 72 as Mevamah, but he omitted the Latin key from the Psalm: it should be 'requies' (rest), from *requiem* in Psalm 114:7.

The Revelation of the Shechinah (1887), a somewhat obscure and dithyrambic commentary on the Tarot, is ascribed to 'Vincit Qui Se Vincit', the motto in the S.R.I.A of Frederick Holland.³⁸ On pp. 17-18, his description of the Tree of Life contains the statement, 'the whole of the Archetypal world becomes the En Soph to three more, and form the four decads of the Tora ... the true wheel of life'. 'These four decads form the different kinds of cards,' we are told; 'but instead of being clubs, cups, swords and pentacles, they are the four letters of the great name.' This is probably the first appearance in print of the term 'Pentacles' for the Coins suit. It was presumably that used among Holland's associates. It seems to have meant 'talismanic images' and was not limited to five-pointed stars. Only later, as in the Tarot by Comte C. de Saint-Germain and in the Waite/Smith Tarot, were stars conjoined with the circular suit-signs. In his writings, Lévi had used the term *pantacles* in the sense of 'talismanic images', associating it with the suit of Deniers or Coins; AE. Waite, in translating Lévi's texts, retained 'Pantacles', a word unknown to the Oxford English Dictionary.³⁹

Holland proceeds to explain that the circle of cards forming a 'wonder wheel' are nine cards from each of four suits; 'the tenth in each set denotes union', he says, presumably adhering to the symbolism of the 10s in his private Tarot. In this treatise, there are Kings, Queens, Chevaliers and Valets, representing Fathers, Mothers, Sons and Daughters.

In *The Revelation of the Shechinah*, Holland, by referring to the trumps as the '22 hieroglyphical cards', shows himself still connecting the Tarot with ancient Egypt as well as the Cabala. They represent the Hebrew letters, he says; and he follows the *Sepher Yetzirah* in adding that they represent 'the three principles, the seven planets, and the 12 signs of the

zodiac'. He concludes that they correspond 'exactly with the Egyptian Zodiac'. The reader is then surprised to be informed that 'This wheel is the one very often seen as the East Window in churches and cathedrals': it is 'the key to the squaring of the circle, the enigma of the Sphinx, the building of the Pyramids, and the doubling of the cubical stone'. Holland claimed that his work was plagiarised by Papus, but there is no such debt in the Frenchman's writing. Instead, both Tarotists were simply extending the general type of Cabalism published by Éliphas Lévi.

Holland resigned from the Hengist Lodge in 1887, but then became a member of the newly constituted Horsa Lodge, as well as of the St Cuthberga Lodge at Wimborne Minister, near Bournemouth. In about 1890, Holland moved to Birmingham and took over his father's business upon the latter's retirement or death; he is described on his death certificate as a retired manufacturer. He did not pursue his interests by joining the Golden Dawn when it formed in 1888. He lived at 19 Greenhill Road, in Moseley, a suburb of Birmingham, and gave his house the name 'The Athanor', which suggests that he conducted alchemical operations there. By the turn of the century he had faded from the general occult scene, but maintained his acquaintance with Westcott, to whom he wrote in April 1910, ridiculing Mathers' pretensions to Scottish descent. He had at least one son, W.A.L. Holland, who was still living with his parents at the time of his father's death. That occurred on 27 September 1917, as the result of an unsuccessful operation for gallstones. In his will, Frederick left everything to his widow, Florence Green Holland; but the estate proved to be worth no more than £20.

W.W. Westcott and his Tarot sketches

Dr William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925), the son of a surgeon, was born in Leamington Spa; having lost both parents in childhood he was brought up by his unmarried uncle, also a surgeon. Qualifying in medicine at University College, London, Westcott became a partner in his uncle's practice at Martock in Somerset in 1871, and, in the same year, a Freemason. Four years later, Westcott was claiming to have been Manager of the Martock Fire Brigade and of the National Schools, although there is no record of this.⁴⁰ He married Elizabeth Burnett in February 1873; of the five children she had by him, all but one predeceased him.

At a meeting in Manchester in January 1877 Westcott was appointed Supreme Grand Senior Deacon of Yarker's Swedenborgian Rite. Westcott joined the Emanuel Lodge and Temple of the Rite, which, though officially located in Bristol, held its first meeting in Weston-super-Mare in May 1877. In 1879 the Westcotts moved to Hendon; there W. Westcott devoted two years to the study of occult literature, being admitted to the Metropolitan College of the S.R.I.A. in April 1880, attaining the Second Order in December 1881 and becoming its Secretary-General in 1883.⁴¹ He was appointed Deputy Coroner for Central Middlesex and Central London; he contributed to W.H. Martindale's *The Extra Pharmacopoeia of Unofficial Drugs* of 1883, and in 1885 published *A Social Science Treatise: Suicide*. It was also in 1883 that Westcott became a founder member of the Society of Eight. He corresponded with Mathers, but according to R.A. Gilbert, Mathers' surviving letters written from 1882 to 1886 show that Westcott was not forthcoming about his involvement with the Society of Eight. By 1886, the Swedenborgian Rite was virtually in abeyance, and Westcott wrote to Frederick Irwin on 2 September to say that he and John Yarker were trying to revive it; he eventually became its Grand Senior Warden and Supreme Grand Secretary. In 1886 he joined the Hermetic Society, founded in 1884 by Anna Kingsford (1846-88) when she parted from the Theosophical Society.

Anna Kingsford preferred to study Western occultism and resented Mme Blavatsky's involvement with adepts in India. Mrs Kingsford, who had converted to Catholicism in 1872, was unorthodox in her faith. Like Éliphas Lévi, whom she admired, she struggled to reconcile the Christian religion with pagan magic. She believed that she had, by magical direction of her will, brought about the deaths of two vivisectionists, Claude Bernard and Paul Bert, and was resolved, if she lived long enough, to do the same for Louis Pasteur.⁴² In 1886 she took instruction in the necessary technique from 'a notable expert', possibly Mathers.⁴³ Within a few months she was diagnosed with a disease that would prove fatal.

In about 1886, Westcott made ink sketches for Tarot trumps.⁴⁴ He omits trump titles, but uses recognisable subjects and the numbers given in the French order of trumps. He demonstrates his familiarity with cards by Etteilla as well as books by Éliphas Lévi. Cursive inscriptions in the margins of the drawings have consistent themes, possibly meant to parallel the Cabalistic realms of *Atziluth* (Emanation), *Briah* (Creation), *Yetzirah*

(Formation) and *Assiah* (Manifestation). Westcott's terms are 'Divine World' (in the top margin), 'Celestial World' (bottom), 'Intellectual World' (right) and 'Terrestrial World' (left). These terms encapsulate the allegorical meanings that Lévi expounded for the trumps; the captions in the right and bottom margins, respectively, reduce to number symbolism (relying on the numbers usual in the Tarot de Marseille) and astrology (relying on Lévi's use of the *Sepher Yetzirah*). The bodies of the cards contain Hebrew letters in conformity with Lévi's attributions – beginning with *Aleph* for the first trump and ending with *Shin* for the Fool and *Tau* for the World. However, someone, presumably Westcott, has crossed out these last two letters and interchanged them. This order was being used by some members of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (see [Chapter 3](#)). On the designs marked Eight (Justice), Sixteen (Tower) and Nineteen (Sun), Westcott has brief notations, always flagged with an ambiguous 'Rit' followed by numbers. These prove to be page references in Lévi's *Rituel*.

The 22 chapters of the *Rituel* allude, sometimes vaguely, to the trumps with corresponding numbers. In Chapter XXII, Lévi summarises all the Tarot keys. Here Westcott found the major inspiration for his pictures. In the first key, a youthful man, standing at a table laden with 'swords, cups and pantacles', lifts a 'miraculous rod', which Westcott pictures as the caduceus of Hermes. The youth has 'curly hair, like Apollo or Mercury'; Westcott makes the locks long enough to suggest the traditional Christ, also depicting a long robe, beard and halo. The personified Duad, although she holds the book of the Popess, is supposed to be Isis and accordingly wears the Egyptian crown with a disc framed by a pair of horns. While Lévi mentions her mantle, Westcott makes it a transparent veil covering her entire figure, which is seated. Lévi's Empress, also seated, is described as holding a sceptre topped with a globe. Westcott provides a terrestrial globe, sizeable and embellished with a world map. Lévi notes that 'her sign is an eagle', and Westcott makes the bird perch on the woman's shoulder. According to Lévi, the Emperor's body 'represents a right-angled triangle and his legs a cross'. Westcott allows the sovereign casually to cross his right shin over his left; he sits in a profile pose, and his sword, sheathed at his side, tilts backward to form a hypotenuse against perpendiculars in the throne. The Pope is seated on a dais above two kneeling 'ministers' as described by Lévi. He says that the men's heads, together with the capitals of two flanking pillars, denote the Quinary.

Westcott improves on the formula by involving five globes: a geographical globe supported by each capital, a pair of imperial orbs affixed to the corners of the chair's back and one spherical connection along the staff of the Pope's cross. The floor of his chamber is tiled in a chequered pattern.

Other influences on Westcott's pictures were visual rather than verbal. He has copied Lévi's Chariot, illustrated in the *Rituel*. (The Devil is there too, but the equivalent picture is missing from Westcott's sketches.) Westcott copied his Wheel of Fortune from a plate in Lévi's *La Clef des grands mystères*. Another source was the Grand Etteilla, the Tarot by Alliette. Several of his cards include tiled floors like that surrounding Westcott's Pope. Both Westcott and Etteilla show the Hermit as a monk wandering amid classical architecture. Westcott's skeletal reaper preserves Etteilla's Death, but the exotic pyramids have become Christian graves. The Tower is not Etteilla's classical temple, but a ziggurat (the 'Tower of Babel' in the 'Divine World'). Westcott imitates the figures and landscapes that Etteilla adapted from the Star and the Moon in the Tarot de Marseille.

Several of Westcott's images have traits never envisioned by French Tarotists. In his version of the Love key, Cupid aims an arrow at a bearded man who, classically draped and seated in a classical chair, resembles a poet or orator. To his right is a lady in peplum and sandals; to his left is a nude woman whose long tresses are snakes like Medusa's. The allegories of Justice, Fortitude and Temperance also wear classical costumes. Robes cover those who rise from their graves at the sound of the angel's trumpet in the twentieth allegory. Westcott follows Etteilla and Lévi in accepting the nudity of the figures for the Star, the Sun and the World, as in the Tarot de Marseille. Westcott also represents the Hanged Man as nude, inverted on a gibbet of massive tree trunks. Westcott's Fool, however, is dressed in modern clothes: cap, jacket, trousers and one boot. The other boot, upside down, is impaled atop the vagabond's walking-stick. The worrisome animal in this case is a spotted cat or leopard. The tramp advances toward a riverbank or ditch. He is decrepit and deliberately comical, the antithesis of the radiant youth that, at later dates, would be conceived by A.E. Waite and others. Most of Westcott's figures occupy spacious settings, whether natural or architectural. Of the latter, key Nineteen is noteworthy: beneath the sun, a nude couple stands on a wide pavement, surrounded by four crenellated walls. Westcott's innovations occur where Lévi's descriptions

were inadequate and where Etteilla's Tarot altogether lacked the standard trumps. In these instances, Westcott oddly ignores the mutual ancestor, the Tarot de Marseille. Perhaps it was unfamiliar to Westcott in the mid-1880s; or possibly he disdained it as having been hopelessly corrupted by cardmakers who catered to games-players.

The Tarot has a significant place in Westcott's short treatise on the 'Isiac Table', entitled *Tabula Bembina, sive Mensa Isiaca* and published by Robert Fryar in Bath in 1887, the same year that Holland published his treatise. Westcott's discussion of the Tarot, which opens with the statement that it fell into the hands of sham diviners and of games-players, occupies the last two pages of the nineteen very broad pages of this book. Westcott's discussion is largely based on Lévi, but he diverges from him in certain respects.⁴⁵ He again attributes Hebrew letters to trumps, assigning *Shin* to trump 21 and *Tau* to the Fool, as in his sketches. Westcott cites the *Sepher Yetzirah* for astrological associations with the Hebrew letters; the signs of the zodiac are associated with the 'simple letters' in the same way, but Westcott disagrees with Lévi's association in his *La Clef des grands mystères* of planets to the 'double letters'.

Letter	Lévi	Westcott
<i>Beth</i>	(2) Moon	(2) Moon
<i>Gimel</i>	(3) Venus	(3) Mars
<i>Daleth</i>	(4) Jupiter	(4) Sun
<i>Kaph</i>	(11) Mars	(11) Venus
<i>Pe</i>	(17) Mercury	(17) Mercury
<i>Resh</i>	(20) Saturn	(20) Saturn
<i>Tau</i>	(21) Sun	(0) Jupiter

For the three 'mother letters' Westcott follows the *Sepher Yetzirah* in assigning air to *Aleph* (1), water to *Mem* (13) and fire to *Shin* (21). His preferred names for the trumps are: (1) the Magus; (2) the Hierophantess; (3) the Queen or Juno; (4) the King or Jupiter; (5) the Hierophant; (6) Marriage; (7) the Conqueror in a Chariot; (8) Justice; (9) the Hermit; (10) the Wheel of Fate; (11) Fortitude; (12) the Hanged Man or the Adept; (13) Death; (14) Temperance; (15) the Devil; (16) the House of Plutus; (17) the Dog Star; (18) the Moon; (19) the Sun; (20) the Last Judgment; (21) the

World or the Crown; (0) the Uninitiate or the Fool. Westcott lists their significances, which derive largely from Éliphas Lévi and Paul Christian. Less usual are those of Westcott's *Resh* (20) and *Shin* (21), for which he gives 'Medicine' and 'Animals', respectively.

Westcott names the suits Swords, Cups, Clubs or Wands and Coins or Shekels. They are associated with numerous quaternaries, such as the letters of the Sacred Name, the four cherubim (Lion, Man, Eagle and Bull), and the letters INRI of the inscription on the Holy Cross. The numeral cards of each suit represent the ten *sephiroth* in the four Cabalistic worlds. Divination arose because each card had a clear symbolic meaning; e.g. the 7 of Cups means the Netzach of *He*, or Victory of the woman, Netzach being the seventh *sephira* and Cups being associated with the first *He* of the Tetragrammaton. In these Cabalistic interpretations, Westcott was again relying directly on Éliphas Lévi.

By the time Anna Kingsford died in 1888, her Society had collapsed. Westcott subsequently became a member of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. This was Mme Blavatsky's concession to those of her followers who wanted an approved study of ceremonial magic. However, Westcott apparently wanted an occult society in which he could play a primary role. In 1888 he founded the famous Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. (His role in the Order will be covered in later chapters.)

In 1894 Westcott became Coroner for north-east London, a position he held until his retirement in 1918. His medical colleagues seem to have been largely unaware of his involvement in magic, which absorbed his leisure time, although he published on the subject under his own name. He was genuinely learned about the occult; but what most attracted him to it was its play-acting aspect. He felt no great drive to engage in practical magic; but he loved dressing up in costume and taking part in esoteric rituals, which provided him with an absorbing fantasy existence, complementing his staid professional career. He joined every esoteric society, particularly Masonic ones, that would admit him. In his diary for 1902, A.E. Waite wrote of Westcott that he 'is a man whom you may ask by chance concerning some almost nameless Rite and it will prove very shortly that he is either its British custodian or the holder of some high office therein'.^{[46](#)}

S.L. Mathers and the Tarot

Samuel Liddell Mathers (1854-1918) was born in January in West Hackney, where his father worked as a merchant's clerk. After his father's death, which may have occurred in 1870, his mother moved to Bournemouth, where Mathers, her only child, lived with her until her own death in 1885. He was devoted to occult studies; he became a Mason in 1877 and a member of the S.R.I.A. in 1882, at the same time as Frederick Holland. Mathers moved to London after his mother's death, where he spent much time at the British Museum pursuing his studies of the occult.

There is no record of Mathers' having had any gainful employment beyond his magical pursuits, which produced but few publications, and he seems to have lived in extreme poverty: unlike Westcott, he had no career outside magic; it is probably the one field in which he could have excelled and is certainly the only one in which he had the drive to excel. As a means of self-promotion, or because he persuaded himself of the truth of his own stories, he misrepresented his accomplishments and social status. At times he claimed to have held an Army commission, of which there is no record. Ellic Howe, in his *Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, reproduces a photograph of Mathers in the uniform of a lieutenant of the Volunteer Artillery. A more successful and longer-lasting imposture was his assumption of a fictitious Scottish ancestry; early in life he inserted the name 'MacGregor' before his surname, sometimes with a hyphen. Already by 1878 he had adopted the title Comte de Glenstrae,⁴⁷ which he regularly used in France. He could impress esoterists and magicians: he knew both Mme Blavatsky, who befriended him, but who mistrusted his absorption in ritual magic,⁴⁸ and Anna Kingsford, to whose Hermetic Society he lectured on the Cabala. He dedicated his *Kabbalah Unveiled* to Anna Kingsford and to Edward Maitland, her collaborator in writing *The Perfect Way*.

Mathers – calling himself S.L. MacGregor Mathers – published *The Tarot: Its Occult Signification, Use in Fortune-Telling and Method of Play* in 1888. It was the first discrete work about Tarot occultism and cartomancy published in Britain, and was sold for five shillings, together with an imported Tarot pack. The title is still available in several New York editions, one dated 1993. The booklet introduced Tarot divination to the British public for the first time. To anyone with a bent in that direction, but previously ignorant of the Tarot, it must have been exciting; to anyone now looking for some original ideas on the subject, it is wholly

disappointing. It simply repeats earlier theories. Mathers refers to Court de Gébelin, Etteilla, Éliphas Lévi, Paul Christian and Vaillant, and borrows from all of them. He follows Court de Gébelin in ascribing an Egyptian origin to Tarot cards, and associates the Hebrew letters with the 22 trumps according to the system of Lévi, with 'The Foolish Man', numbered 0, inserted between trumps 20 and 21. Following Etteilla, Mathers numbers the suit cards from 22 to 77. He endows the trumps with occult meanings (the greater part taken from Paul Christian), gives all 78 cards their divinatory meanings (mostly from Etteilla), and describes various cartomantic methods (largely Etteilla's). Mathers' account of the game played with the Tarot pack depends on Court de Gébelin's description in his *Monde primitif*.

Among Mathers' own contributions, he informed his readers that Gringonneur – a painter who made playing cards for Charles VI of France in 1392, and to whom the Tarot cards now at the Bibliothèque Nationale were formerly erroneously attributed – was an astrologer and Cabalist, a wholly improbable statement for which Mathers gave no evidence. He proposed a new derivation for the word 'tarot', namely from an Egyptian word *táru* meaning 'to consult'; however, this word is not to be found in Wallis Budge's Egyptian dictionary. More importantly, Mathers largely established the occultist nomenclature of Tarot cards in English. He called trump 1 'the Magician', trump 2 'the High Priestess', trump 5 'the Hierophant', trump 16 'the Lightning-struck Tower', trump 20 'the Last Judgement' and trump 21 'the Universe'; for the remainder he used the traditional names. He did not, indeed, use the terms 'major Arcana' and 'minor Arcana', which later became usual among occultists. Following Paul Christian, he called the Batons suit 'Sceptres'; later, 'Wands' was to become more popular in occult circles. He also called the Coins suit 'Pentacles', a name subsequently used by all English-speaking occultists; it seems to have been common among occultists of that time, but had not been previously used in any work intended for the general public. Mathers gave a table in which the Coins suit is labelled 'money, Circles, or Pentacles'.⁴⁹ He may not have meant by 'pentacle' a five-pointed star, since the word was sometimes used in a wider application to other magical emblems. Mathers' booklet was not illustrated. According to A.E. Waite, it was designed to be used with an imported Tarot.⁵⁰ This would have been a standard Tarot as manufactured for card play in continental Europe. A

relevant pack has survived from the 1880s; it is a Tarot de Marseille, in the tradition of Nicholas Conver (XVIII century). Ink inscriptions, added by hand, conform to the cartomantic meanings given in Mathers's booklet. The 'pentacles' are naturally the Coins that had long served the games-players (see plate 1).

PART II

SYNCRETISM KEPT SECRET

CHAPTER 3

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor

The previous chapter cited England's first authors to discuss the Tarot in the context of esoterism. However, English-language publications on the subject had appeared earlier in the United States. The Tarot was already known there as a divinatory device and a Hermetic allegory, following the French interpretations.¹ America's earliest innovative contribution was an article, 'The Taro', which appeared anonymously in 1885 in *The Platonist*, a philosophical journal.² The article was later noticed by Waite, who dismissed it as having 'strong titles to negligence' and being 'a ridiculous performance'.³

The word 'Taro', we are told, is an anagram of Latin 'Rota', meaning 'wheel' and signifying the cosmic wheel on which the planets revolve. It was invented in a remote epoch by inspired men or munis, apparently in India. Of its cards, 21 are the 'keys' making 'seven trines': 'there are really 22, but the additional one is 0 or zero' and so not counted. The seer uses the cards to answer a question occupying his mind: he places them around a circle, consisting of 12 points, corresponding to signs of the zodiac, and divided into four trines, each corresponding to a colour; in the centre of the circle are placed the four Aces on four points, each corresponding to one of the trines. Paul Christian is then quoted as saying that the 22 Arcana correspond to 'the letters of the sacred language', and that each expresses a reality of three worlds, the divine, the intellectual and the physical. The writer gives no more explicit account of either the pack or the proposed uses for it than this, but goes on to speculate that 'empyreal intelligences' may assist the earnest student in the operation.

He then makes the extraordinary claim that, in addition to the 22 exoteric keys, there are known to adepts to be another 22 esoteric keys. The author has never seen them and knows no one who possesses them. An 'earnest English neophyte, who has attained to a considerable degree of lucidity', has conjectured that the 'supernatural intelligences themselves'

impress the designs for the esoteric keys on blank cards prepared by a student who has acquired a sufficient degree of perfection.

The author goes on to say that even the Gypsies, a 'Pariah race', brought a Taro with them; but the Taro was first brought by the Moors through Spain to Italy. There, however, the 'wily priesthood' induced the people to use it only for 'a harmless game called Tarocchi', still played. There follows a brief account by 'the same English neophyte' of 'The Chinese Taro'; this proves to consist of coloured trigrams. After this, the main writer tells us that initiates to the Egyptian mysteries were led into a chamber within the pyramids on the walls of which were portrayed the 22 Arcana; and that Pythagoras and Plato underwent this initiation. This is another borrowing from Christian's *Histoire de la magie*. The article ends by criticising those who hold that only 'the natives of the East' have the gifts for success in occultism. Indians once possessed those gifts to perfection, but have now lost them and are in a state of physical and moral degradation. It is probably now 'we Westerns' who will attain them, following the active Egyptian system rather than the passive Indian one. The author believes that soon there will be men in America who will be able to read the Taro perfectly.

The spelling of Taro, without the final consonant, is characteristic of an occult society called the H.B. of L. (the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor).⁴ This is undoubtedly the source of 'The Taro' in *The Platonist*. Its editor was Thomas More Johnson (1851-1919) of Osceola, Missouri.⁵ He was an expert on Hegelianism and Neoplatonism and was a prominent member of the H.B. of L. Some of his colleagues were hostile to Mme Blavatsky: this could explain why the essay denigrates contemporary India, where she had relocated her Theosophical Society. In 1885, the leaders of the H.B. of L. were about to move from Britain to the United States: this could explain why men in America might be expected to attain perfect use of the Taro.

Leaders of the H. B. of L.

The group's organisers were two Scotsmen, Peter Davidson (1837-1916) and Thomas Henry Burgoyne (1855?-95?). The latter may have been the unnamed author of 'The Taro'.⁶ Burgoyne's origins are obscure; even his name was probably an alias. His legal surname was probably Dalton. One source makes him a physician's son.⁷ However, he does not seem to have

acquired a formal education or a steady income. As a young man in London, he was employed as 'secretary' to a certain Max Theon. In fact, Burgoyne had no secretarial skills. He actually served as a medium: his employer was established as a psychic healer.

In 1881 Burgoyne sought other masters. He sent a letter, signed d'Alton, to the Reverend W.A. Ayton, who was a clergyman of the Church of England and well known in occult circles as an alchemist. He had been born in Bloomsbury, London, on 28 April 1816, and educated at Charterhouse (then in the City) and at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He obtained his B.A. in 1841 and was ordained a deacon in the same year, attaining the priesthood in 1843. He had various rural parishes in the North Midlands, and became a Freemason at Wellington, Shropshire, in 1866. He was transferred from Edingdale, Staffordshire to Chacombe, near Banbury in Oxfordshire, in 1873. (There he remained until he retired in 1894.) He became Master of the Masonic Lodge at Banbury in 1878, and installed a secret alchemical laboratory in the basement of his vicarage. Burgoyne (as d'Alton) visited the vicar at Chacombe, but was not made welcome. He claimed the ability to conjure spirits and aspired to know more about spiritism. Ayton supposedly recoiled at this 'Black Magic', as he called it, although he himself spoke casually of commanding 'elementals', and was certainly not averse to training disciples.

In 1882 the disappointed Burgoyne was living in Leeds. He conceived a ruse for making money: using the name W. Seymour, he placed a newspaper advertisement announcing available employment as a grocery clerk. Respondents were to tender an application fee of 2s 6d. The job was however non-existent, and when 'Seymour' received 30 penny stamps, he was arrested. The police discovered the entrepreneur's aliases and his activities as a 'medium and astrologer'. He was convicted of mail fraud and sentenced to seven months in Armley Prison.⁸ Upon his release in the summer of 1883, he must have resolved to start a more secure enterprise in occultism. He formed, or revived, a friendship with Peter Davidson.

Davidson's first career was as a maker of violins, when he lived in Forres, in Morayshire. In 1866 he married Christina Ross; they began a family, to which he was devoted. He described his craft in a book, *The Violin* (Glasgow, 1871, 1880). In the 1870s he also found employment in a distillery. This work, though menial, may have fostered his interest in herbal extracts and distillates. He may even have written to the alchemist

Ayton. He certainly corresponded with Ayton's friend F.G. Irwin and with Hargrave Jennings. In 1878 Davidson published a pamphlet, *The Philosophy of Man*. This is a diatribe against orthodox medicine, the use of inorganic drugs and, above all, vaccination against smallpox. The leaflet is unlikely to have impressed the medical profession, since it praises Paracelsus and Mesmer, declares for the truth of Magnetism and twice quotes 'Eliphaz Lévi'⁹ in favour of the Astral Light, 'the magnetic influence exercised by the stars and planets upon every living creature'.¹⁰ On the title page, the author describes himself as a 'member of several occult societies of Europe and Asia'. The pamphlet is dedicated 'to my Noble and Beneficent Adept and Preceptor'. This person may have been similar to Mme Blavatsky's invisible Masters: Davidson spoke of having contacted an adept 'in the Astral form'.¹¹ In the spring of 1880, Davidson joined the Theosophical Society, which by that time was operating principally in India.

Some western members of the Theosophical Society wished to form an Esoteric Section for would-be magicians, but Mme Blavatsky resisted. The field of ritual magic remained open for development by others, such as Anna Kingsford and her Hermetic Society. In 1884, the very year in which Mme Blavatsky made a visit to London, the H.B. of L. began public recruitment. An advertisement for the Brotherhood appeared in an edition of *The Divine Pyramider of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus* published by Robert H. Fryar of Bath. The Brotherhood began inauspiciously by setting itself against Mme Blavatsky as it welcomed 'Students of the Occult Science, searchers after truth and Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expectations of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDOO MAHATMAS ...' Robert Fryar was poised to meet the instructional needs of the nascent Brotherhood. In the same year, 1884, he finished translating Alphonse Cahagnet's treatise on 'magnetic magic'.¹² Fryar also edited other occult works.¹³ He imported mirrors and Tarots, which he sold for occult use, but he is now best known as the bookseller whose business provided the nexus among occultists in Britain, Europe and America. Fryar was a personal friend of Ayton and his wife; all three joined the H.B. of L. Instructions arrived by post, so Ayton had no opportunity to see that Burgoyne was the repulsive d'Alton; and no one in the Brotherhood, save its founders, knew that he was the felon 'Seymour'.

Burgoyne was the Brotherhood's Secretary General. Davidson was Provincial Grand Master of the North. Ayton was the Provincial Grand Master of the South. His disciple, in France, was François-Charles Barlet. Barlet became the French representative of the H.B. of L., in which he enlisted Papus (Gérard Encausse) and other well known French occultists. There were also members in the United States: the Brotherhood established an American Central Council under the presidency of Thomas More Johnson. The Grand Master of the Exterior Circle of the H.B. of L. was Burgoyne's old friend Theon.

This friend greatly disguised his origins, and the name 'Theon' was definitely an alias. He appears to have been the son of a rabbi in Poland, who fled the anti-Semitism of the State. He is known to have reached Paris by 1870 and he personally stated that he was initiated into occultism in 1873, by which time he was living in London. In 1885 he married a British spiritualist, Mary Woodroffe Ware. Their marriage license gives his name as 'Louis Maximilian Bimstein' and his birthdate as 1855.¹⁴ Theon helped to found the H.B. of L., but he remained so aloof that his contributions are hard to discern. Perhaps he merely continued his old role as Burgoyne's supervisor whenever the latter entered one of his instructive trances: some doctrines of the H.B. of L. purportedly came from spirits through Burgoyne's mediumship.

Some English-speaking occultists believe that Theon wrote *Ghost Land* and *Art Magic*.¹⁵ Those books were certainly well regarded in the H.B. of L. Moreover, Emma Hardinge Britten, as editor of both books, called the author 'Louis' and the 'Chevalier de B___', which might seem to comport with 'Louis Maximilian Bimstein'. However, the young adept in *Ghost Land* is portrayed as a Hungarian noble who served as a soldier in India, not a Polish refugee who served as a healer in St John's Wood. Britten also said that her friend was living in Havana in 1876, having travelled in Asia and America. None of this fits Theon's known biography. Even if Mrs Britten engaged in deliberate obfuscation, Theon's life cannot be made to fit the probable dates. Britten claimed that her friend had been a member of the Orphic Society, which she had left by 1850.¹⁶ Theon, we know, dated his initiation to 1873. Emma Hardinge Britten felt free to reveal her friend's membership in 1879 because he had died by that date. Theon was still very much alive, and might have objected to an announcement of his demise, had he really been involved in any of this. No evidence suggests

that he ever met Mrs Britten. She herself remains the best nominee as the real author of *Ghost Land* and *Art Magic*.

Some French-speaking occultists believe that Theon was the son of Metamon, the Chaldean or Coptic magician who had tutored Mme Blavatsky.¹⁷ Possibly Theon had actually known Mme Blavatsky, but the evidence is slim: Mirra Alfassa, one of Theon's students between 1905 and 1908, said at a much later date that Theon worked with Mme Blavatsky to form an occult society in Egypt.¹⁸ The event would have occurred in 1871 and must have been brief (limited to a few weeks, if the society was the *Société Spirite*). Moreover, at that time, Theon was no more than 24 and may have been as young as 16. He is unlikely to have been sophisticated enough to aid Mme Blavatsky who was then about 40. If she had been well acquainted with Theon, she would certainly have regarded his participation in the H.B. of L. as a personal affront, and she would certainly have chastised him, at least in veiled terms. Her silence in this regard suggests that Theon was unknown to her. Theon's alleged relationship to Metamon is another problem. Theon was not a Copt. Had he been able to claim any Egyptian origin, surely he would have used it to enhance his persona as an adept. Instead, he hinted at knowledge of the Cabala. That heritage would be reasonable in one who was actually the son of a rabbi. In a recent work, K. Paul Johnson suggests that Metamon, while not the father of Theon, was his teacher.¹⁹ But even this seems unlikely if limited to a short period in Theon's youth. It is also unclear what Metamon is supposed to have taught: our only witnesses describe him as a simple fortune-teller and conjurer with no pretensions as a spiritualist or an occultist philosopher (see [Chapter 1](#)). And again, Theon himself did not claim to have become an initiate until 1873.

Johnson argues that, in Theosophical circles, Theon is thought to have been the Egyptian Tuitit.²⁰ This is an unlikely identification, for reasons stated above (Theon's Jewish heritage and his youth as compared to Mme Blavatsky's maturity). Furthermore, Tuitit was supposed to have been residing in Cairo; but in the 1870s, when Colonel Olcott was being enlightened, Theon was living in London. If we are to believe Mme Blavatsky, Olcott was the only modern white man involved with the Egyptian Masters. This would exclude Theon, a Pole. We have seen that Tuitit never repudiated Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott: the Egyptian Master simply disappeared with the advent of the Hindu Mahatmas. This

would be unlikely conduct if Tuitit was really Theon. Had he in fact occupied a hieratic position superior to Mme Blavatsky, his H.B. of L., so hostile to her, could have revealed much more about her odd behaviour and fluctuating beliefs when she and the other Theosophists were first organising in New York.

The Reverend Ayton believed that Theon's real name was Chintamon.²¹ Hurrychund Chintamon was the author of *A Commentary on the Text of Bhagavad-Gita* (London, 1874). As president of the Arya Samaj, he had received donations from the New York Theosophists and he welcomed Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott when they docked in Bombay. Chintamon sponsored a lavish reception and installed the newcomers in a house of his. He then alienated them with his first rental fee, which included preliminary house repairs and all the bills for the reception. Olcott, a lawyer, investigated Chintamon and discovered that he had embezzled the Theosophists' donations. Chintamon was obliged to restore the money, and Mme Blavatsky engineered his expulsion from the Arya Samaj. He then left India for England where he defamed Mme Blavatsky. He had letters which somehow incriminated her, and he hoped to sell them. In this he was disappointed, but he apparently spread his malice to Thomas Burgoyne.²² Chintamon probably convinced Burgoyne that Mme Blavatsky was a charlatan and a traitor to the Western tradition of magic. This would explain how Burgoyne came to despise a woman whom he had never met. He must have been able to sway Davidson, so that they publicly disparaged Mme Blavatsky's 'HINDOO MAHATMAS', even though Davidson had joined the Theosophical Society. Having accomplished this damage to Mme Blavatsky's reputation, Chintamon returned to his native India to harass the Theosophists there.

Chintamon and Theon (Bimstein) were distinct persons. The latter was neither the Chevalier Louis nor the Master Tuitit. 'Louis' was almost certainly the brainchild of Emma Hardinge Britten. 'Tuitit' was almost certainly one of the many brainchildren of Mme Blavatsky.

Davidson and Burgoyne, as theorists and planners for the H.B. of L., initially published under pseudonyms, 'Mejnour' and 'Zanoni', respectively. They submitted frequent articles to their Brotherhood's journal, first called *The Seer*, then *The Occultist*, then *The Occult Magazine*, based in Glasgow and edited by Davidson. In October 1885, this journal and T.M. Johnson's *The Platonist* announced an ambitious

project. The Brotherhood planned to locate rural land in the United States and develop it as a 'colony'. Members would build a rural community, supported by farming, mining and other commercial developments of the land. Interested persons could invest at £10 per share. Various sites were considered. A Brotherhood member, S.C. Gould, owned land near Loudsville in White County, Georgia. Davidson and Burgoyne agreed to buy this tract. A detailed prospectus was drafted, printed and privately circulated.²³ The founders announced that in the spring of 1886 they would move to their new home.

However, just when the future of the H.B. of L. seemed bright, it suddenly clouded over. Burgoyne's criminal record was discovered by some of the Reverend Ayton's disciples in Yorkshire, where Burgoyne had worked as an astrologer. *The Theosophist* later carried a report, signed by 'A VICTIM',²⁴ probably T.H. Holmes or T.H. Pattinson.²⁵ Both applied to the H.B. of L., but Pattinson, who had known Ayton since 1881 or 1882,²⁶ and who was a leading member of the group that Ayton called his 'Yorkshire chelas', was rejected. The article says that a Yorkshire neophyte, applying to the H.B. of L., received a horoscope from the group's anonymous astrologer (Burgoyne). The recipient recognised Burgoyne's scrawling penmanship as that previously received from an astrologer who had been convicted of mail fraud in Leeds. The neophyte notified Ayton, who prevailed on the Leeds police to provide him with a photograph of Burgoyne/Seymour. The parson recognised it as d'Alton, the presumptuous Black Magician. (Unreliable hearsay misled the vicar to regard Burgoyne's tutors, Theon and Chintamon, as one man.) Ayton and his disciples dispatched alarms to friends at home and abroad: that the directors of the H.B. of L. were evil sorcerers and criminals. He also notified Mme Blavatsky, who relayed the news to her Society. She remained alert to possibilities of revenge against her detractors in the H.B. of L. Ayton declared that, contrary to the Brotherhood's advertisement for the projected settlement, he had never publicly endorsed it; and this seems likely, since a public endorsement would have raised questions about the vicar's unusual avocations. However, he was conveniently forgetting his recent (private) eagerness to retire to the proposed 'colony'. Now he alleged that the American venture was aimed only at the sale of worthless land shares. (In fact, no money was raised from shares; Davidson and Burgoyne had made other arrangements to buy the land.) Robert Fryar,

who had been expelled from the H.B. of L. for overcharging its neophytes, was quick to print a repudiation of the Brotherhood. Its British members withdrew, but in France and America its following remained steadfast.

Davidson and Burgoyne, departing on schedule for the United States, happened to escape the furore in Britain.^{[27](#)} Both were maligned, as though they were fugitives, by the Reverend Ayton who seems to have forgotten his Christian charity; he relished the thought of Burgoyne full of fear and steeped in squalor. Mme Blavatsky warned US Customs officials of the approaching miscreants. In fact there was no legal obstacle to their entry, and they proceeded to Georgia. However, the two immigrants quarrelled and the occultist colony never materialised. In Loudsville, Davidson made a home for his wife and their four dependent children. (A son was living independently in Great Britain.) Burgoyne, who seems to have been without a family, travelled westward through Kansas and Colorado to California. He continued teaching the doctrines of the H.B. of L., as did Davidson. The men maintained contact only indirectly, through disciples. There is some indication that the two founders contemplated a geographical division of power, perhaps as Grand Masters of the east and of the west. Davidson was eventually content to preside over the French membership. Indeed, Barlet, the Brotherhood's French representative, regarded Davidson's guidance as preferable to Ayton's. Papus also had a special admiration for Davidson, calling him 'my Practical Master (*mon maître en pratique*)'.^{[28](#)}

Davidson's wife died, and he remarried. He sold magic mirrors and medicinal potions, and continued to publish journals and books, some markedly esoteric and some exoteric. Burgoyne eventually met Norman Astley, a surveyor and formerly a captain in the British Army. He and other admirers hired Burgoyne to write out all his teachings. These became available by subscription and were then published in book form, *The Light of Egypt; or, The Science of the Soul and the Stars* (San Francisco, 1889). The book was signed by 'Zanoni', who added his insignia, a swastika. This is understood as a solar symbol, borrowing from 'Zadkiel'. In these swastikas the normal verticals become oblique parallels so that the emblem contains the letter Z. Another of Burgoyne's symbols was the S-shaped serpent, transfixed by a diagonal arrow, which descends from the badge that Cagliostro conferred on his initiates (see [Chapter 1](#)). Burgoyne's ideas received a great boost from Henry and Belle M. Wagner.

They funded the Astro-Philosophical Publishing Company to disseminate Burgoyne's writings, including *The Language of the Stars* (1892) and *Celestial Dynamics; a Course of Astro-Metaphysical Study* (1896), both books on Hermetic astrology. As in *The Light of Egypt*, Burgoyne was revealing H.B. of L. teachings and still giving his name as 'Zanoni'. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. Apparently he died before 1900: in that year, his Denver publisher released *The Light of Egypt*, expanded to two volumes. The added material came from Belle Wagner: she had 'blended' with Burgoyne's spirit, which was thereby 'enabled again to speak on the objective plane of life'. In 1909, Theon, long since established in Algeria and now mourning the death of his wife, wrote to Dr and Mrs Wagner to order the closing of their branch of the H.B. of L.²⁹ This was the effective termination of the Brotherhood. Theon founded the *Mouvement Cosmique*, which combined Jewish Cabalism with the Indian Vedas. This thinking attracted Peter Davidson, and he renewed contact with Theon. Davidson died in 1916 and was buried in Cleveland, Georgia. Theon died in 1927 in Tlemcen, Algeria.

Doctrine and practices of the H.B. of L.

Each soul is said to retain a spark of God's fiery Mind, a medium shared with the stars and other celestial beings, all generated by the Central Sun. The H.B. of L. appropriated various solar symbols as expressive of the divine Mind. The Hermetist imagines a vast hierarchy of spirits evolving and aspiring to unity with God. The H.B. of L. therefore endorsed spiritualism; however, they held that a communication which seemed to come from a departed soul sometimes actually came from another spirit – angelic, planetary or elemental. Magical ceremonies, they taught, can summon appropriate spirits for specific guidance in improving the self, society and nature.

These tenets are basically the same as those of ancient Hermetism. However they seem to have been filtered directly through the teachings of P.B. Randolph. In practical magic, hallucinogens and magic mirrors were used to enter the 'astral' plane. Both Randolph and the H.B. of L. 'charged' their magic mirrors by some sort of sexual rite. Kate Corson had sent Randolph's 'Mysteries of Eulis' to be copied and sold by Robert Fryar. Through him, no doubt, the founders of the H.B. of L. acquired the treatise, which they came to call 'Mysteries of Eros'. It was adopted as

basic instruction in the Brotherhood: sexual intercourse is the most propitious time for the exertion of the magician's will. The Brotherhood acknowledged Randolph as a spiritual forerunner. They explained his suicide as the consequence of his having used sex magic for selfish pleasures rather than the advancement of the species. The Brotherhood also recognised a debt to Mme Blavatsky, especially as she expressed her beliefs in *Isis Unveiled*. However Burgoyne taught that her subsequent attraction to Indian religions was a betrayal of Hermetism.

Emphasising as it did the magical power of sex, the Brotherhood tried to recruit married couples. Applicants were asked to pay a small fee and to send photographic portraits and personal horoscopes, or the dates for casting them. The horoscopes were then scrutinised for the subjects' suitability for occult studies: the photograph was probably analysed by the principles of physiognomy. Applicants completed a brief questionnaire stating religious and esoteric affiliations. The new member(s) learned the order's complete name – the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor – which was publicly known only by its initials. ³⁰ Instruction proceeded by correspondence. The tutor was the only other member whom the neophyte would meet until initiation. This sometimes occurred quite soon, sometimes after years of work. Initiates could convene in 'lodges'. The emphasis, however, was on personal magic, not communal activity. The order was divided into three grades, each with three degrees; these stages had technical names, no longer known with certainty. Only the first grade was normally attainable during mortal life. The second grade was composed of spirits sometimes able to communicate with those of the first grade; the third grade was so elevated as to exceed human understanding. Burgoyne said that he never rose beyond the second degree of the first grade.

More on the 'Taro'

T.H. Burgoyne openly used his name when publishing a new article, again called 'The Taro' and again published in *The Platonist*. It is a long discussion in successive monthly issues from July 1887 to January 1888. ³¹ It starts by expressing surprise that no book has been published on the Taro, although its priceless value is known to initiates; but old books far exceed in value those of modern writers. 'Taro', it explains, really means 'Rota', and is a system of correspondences applicable on all three planes,

Material, Astral and Spiritual; it is both an elaborate system of divination and a process of mental and spiritual evolution. For convenience, the ancient sages divided the Taro into a number of tablets of gold, forming the sacred book of Enoch. There are three sets, for the three planes: it is an error to use the whole Taro on all three planes, even if the seer reserves three distinct but uniform sets for the separate contexts. The public knows only the first, or exoteric, set. It applies only to the material plane and consists of 56 cards and 22 keys. The second, astral, set contains only 22 tablets (presumably distinct from the 22 exoteric keys); the third set 'is the Spiritual, and contains exactly 8 symbols of which the eighth is but the octave repetition of the first'. Only the exoteric set is subsequently discussed.

The 22 keys correspond to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Burgoyne associates *Aleph* with key I, the Magician, and so on in numerical order; but, diverging from Lévi's placing of the Fool between XX and XXI, Burgoyne places it at the end, so that *Shin* is associated with XXI and *Tau* with the Fool; he insists that this is correct. The suits are called Diamonds, Clubs, Cups and Swords; their original names were Roses, Trefoils, Cups and Javelins (a remarkable muddle). They are associated respectively with air and the final *He* of the Tetragrammaton, fire and *Yod*, water and the first *He*, and earth and *Vau*.³² The suits symbolise respectively life, power, love and affection (presumably a misprint for 'affliction'). Multiple meanings, in the physical and intellectual world, are assigned to the 22 keys. Burgoyne interprets the Popess (II) as Isis, Love (VI) as a youth between Vice and Virtue, and the World (XXI) as the Crown. These are legacies from Éliphas Lévi and Paul Christian. Burgoyne shows special insight in his view of the Hanged Man as an emblem of just retribution for treasonable crimes: this comes close to the original Renaissance symbolism.

No attention is paid to the suit-cards other than the Aces. The final section of the article begins by arguing that the Taro cannot be understood without the Kabbalah, nor conversely: 'the intellectual world may be literally flooded with "Kabbalah Denudatas", but ... the human mind will still remain blind' to its teachings until the esoteric principles of the Taro have been mastered. This is a smack at Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* and perhaps at its translation, *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London, 1887) by S.L. Mathers. There follows an explicit recipe for operating with

the cards. The format requires a circle of ten points, numbered from 1 to 10, starting from the point on the left (the West position), in a straightforward clockwise order. These form four quadrants: 1, 2, 10; 3 and 4; 6, 5 and 7; and 8 and 9. Within the circle is a cross, whose four points (clockwise from that in the West position) are labelled 'asc' (ascendant), 'm.c.' (medium coeli), 'dec' and 'nadir'. The 22 keys and the four Aces are extracted separately, the remaining cards being set aside. After shuffling, ten keys are dealt face down to the outer points, in the order 1 to 10, and then another ten, in the order 10 to 1; the two remaining cards are placed face down outside the circle. The Aces are then shuffled and dealt face down to the four inner points, beginning with the 'ascendant' and continuing clockwise. The keys on the four quadrants are then inspected in turn to yield the answer sought to the query that has been put. Burgoyne modelled his divinatory format on an astrological chart and borrowed the names of four horoscopic points to divide his circle into quadrants. However, he preferred a circle of ten cards, not twelve. This is puzzling, for a circle with a dozen cards would have sustained his analogy to a horoscope with its 12 'houses'.

We have no evidence that Burgoyne's article reflects the exact use of the Taro within the H.B. of L. That use may have remained secret. Burgoyne left a hint that he had a unique set of astrological correspondences for the trumps: in *The Light of Egypt* he correctly says that in the Middle Ages the planet Saturn was personified as a hermit. 'It is in this sense that we find it symbolised in the Tarot'.³³

'The Taro' was used as a title for yet another article, appearing not in *The Platonist*, but in an 1888 issue of *Theosophical Siftings*.³⁴ The author in this case is not likely to have been Burgoyne, given his hostility towards Theosophy. And this article contradicts his explicit advice on using the cards. But there can be little doubt that the author was informed by Burgoyne's teachings. The article is brief and business-like; it contains no general remarks, but distinguishes three ways of using the Taro. The first is for questions relating to the lower, everyday, plane; for it only the suit cards are used. The second relates to science, philosophy and religion: for this all the cards are needed. The third, concerned with the Occult, employs just the Aces and the 22 keys. This last is then described.

A coloured diagram shows a circle of twelve numbered points, in the centre of which are four points placed crosswise; they are labelled A to D,

beginning at the West position and continuing clockwise, and are coloured red, yellow, green and violet in that order. The four points on the circle in West, North, East and South positions are numbered from 1 to 4, beginning with West and continuing clockwise; each intermediate point has a number greater by 4 than the point next to it in the anticlockwise direction. (Thus, starting from the point at the West position, the numbers, taken clockwise, run 1, 5, 9, 2, 6, 10, 3, ...). They are divided into trines, each with a colour: the red trine consists of points 1, 6 and 11, the yellow one of 2, 7 and 12, the green one of 3, 8 and 9, and the violet one of 4, 5 and 10.

The Aces are separated and shuffled, and dealt face down to the points on the central cross, in the order A, B, C, D; they form the Astral keys. The 22 remaining 'keys' are then dealt face down to the points on the circle in numerical order (whether only 12 or all 22 is not stated). The Coins suit is called Diamonds; the other suits are called Clubs (i.e. Batons), Cups and Swords. They signify respectively life, power, love and affliction. The four central points, called thrones, have the same four general significations, in the order A to D, as do the trines related to them (those bearing the same colours). If an Ace proves to have been dealt to the corresponding throne (Ace of Diamonds to A, of Clubs to B and so on), the indication is very strong, but is modified by the keys dealt to the corresponding trine. The seer first turns over the Astral key (Ace) most relevant to the question, with the cards of the relevant trine; then the next most relevant, and so on. The meanings of the 22 keys are not explained in the article. It ends by requiring the acquisition of three packs, each assigned to one of the divinatory themes (the mundane, the intellectual, the occult).

Fusion and confusion

The synthesis of modern occultism was well advanced by the 1870s, a busy time in the movement. Mme Blavatsky tried to start her *Société Spirite* at Cairo in 1871, then attempted something similar in New York, where she worked with Emma Hardinge Britten and George Felt, but soon became alienated from them. In 1872, an unnamed 'adept' left the European continent for England and selected a neophyte, probably Theon, who went on to establish the H.B. of L.³⁵ Randolph received an initiation in Paris, and he may have made a final trip to Europe in 1873 or 1874.³⁶ In Paris in 1874, F.G. Irwin received the blessing of the *Fratres Lucis* (Brotherhood of Light) for his own fraternity of that name.

Mme Blavatsky declared that the Brotherhood of Luxor was the Egyptian branch of the Brotherhood of Light.³⁷ The ‘Egyptian’ touch may have been no more than an affectation: it need not imply special ties to her friends in Cairo, who equally need not have had special ties to ancient Egypt. David Board, a modern historian of Theosophy, suggests that Mme Blavatsky's friend Charles Sotheran could have informed her of Irwin's Fratres Lucis when he arrived in New York in 1874.³⁸ Board suggests the possibility that Irwin's Fratres Lucis engendered the Brotherhood of Luxor. However, there is no evidence that Irwin had close ties with the Brotherhood in New York. Sotheran, a member of Irwin's fraternity, was researching the deeds of its hero, Cagliostro. Unfortunately the appearance of Cagliostro serves not to unite the two fraternities, but to divide them. The Irwins assumed that they could converse directly with Cagliostro's spirit; but Mme Blavatsky (at that point) ridiculed ghostly communication. At most, we can only allow that her contact with Sotheran reminded her of a picturesque name, which she used to ornament the New York project (soon aborted anyway in favour of the Theosophical Society). F.G. Irwin, who lived until 1893, does not seem to have capitalised on Mme Blavatsky's announced participation in a branch of the Brotherhood of Light. Nor did he reciprocate by acknowledging ties with the Brotherhood of Luxor in New York. It may be worth noting that he did not belong to the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor.³⁹

Even more confusing are the hypothetical links between the two ‘Luxor’ groups, the Brotherhood of Luxor (first advertised by Colonel Olcott in America in 1875) and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (first advertised by Burgoyne and Davidson in Britain in 1884). The latter group possibly borrowed its name from Olcott's advertisement for ‘*The Committee of Seven*, the BROTHERHOOD OF LUXOR’. Olcott unequivocally said, ‘This title, Brotherhood of Luxor, was pilfered by the schemers who started, several years later, the gudgeon-trap called “The H.B. of L.”’⁴⁰ The connection may be strengthened by the fact the American board of the H.B. of L. called itself ‘The Committee of Seven’.

Alternatively, we could suppose that the founders of the H.B. of L. concocted its name from references in Kenneth Mackenzie's *Cyclopaedia* (1877), which describes the Hermetic Brothers of Egypt.⁴¹ (This fraternity was probably Mackenzie's own fiction.⁴²) More importantly, Mackenzie's

Cyclopaedia refers to the Brotherhood of Luxor: a ‘fraternity in America having a Rosicrucian basis, and numbering many members’.⁴³

Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott never identified the real founders of the Brotherhood of Luxor. ‘Tuitit’ faded away when the partners settled in India. They did not refer to any continued activity by the Brotherhood. Olcott granted that he had belonged to the ‘Luxor’ group mentioned by Mackenzie, but insisted that it was unrelated to the H.B. of L. This would seem a reasonable stance. Mme Blavatsky was even more determined to shun the H.B. of L., but she badly confused the issue. First, in *Isis Unveiled*, she said that the ‘Luxor’ in her group's name was derived from a village in ‘Baloochistan’, and she corrected Mackenzie, claiming that the group had no Rosicrucian basis.⁴⁴ Here she seems to look forward to closer ties with India – or at least more distant ties with Egypt (probably because of enmity with Felt, the disgraced Egyptologist). Two years after Mackenzie's death, Mme Blavatsky said that she had learned more details that improved her understanding of the Brotherhood.⁴⁵ Despite Olcott's stance, she distinguished between their Brotherhood of Luxor and the Brotherhood of Luxor that Mackenzie had placed in America: she had used the name only as a convenience, she claimed, because her group had been affiliated with a branch in Luxor, Egypt. Perhaps she wanted to shift attention from America because it had become the home of the dreaded H.B. of L. Meanwhile Felt had disappeared, so she again could grant at least incidental ties with Egypt. Indian religions, however, commanded her ultimate allegiance, as can be seen in her second ambitious book, *The Secret Doctrine* (London, 1888). Mme Blavatsky died in London on 8 May 1891.

Guénon's views

Upon Barlet's death in 1921, his notes about the H.B. of L. passed to René Guénon. Guénon was well informed about esoteric societies, and was a conscientious critic of them. He believed that the ‘hidden hand’ of a secret society, perhaps operating psychically, had directed the development of XIX-century occultism.⁴⁶ In fact the movement's unity, such as it was, can be explained by the slender ties among its leading exponents and their prolific publications. Guénon tended to ignore differences among the various individuals and groups. He viewed the H.B. of L. as the

reincarnation of the Brotherhood of Luxor and possibly a descendant of Randolph's Brotherhood of Eulis. We can reach other conclusions, while using much of Guénon's information.

Guénon reported that Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were initiated, not by Tuitit, but by the obscure George Felt. According to Guénon, Felt and Mme Blavatsky were introduced by a journalist named Stevens.⁴⁷ Presumably Stevens too was a member of the Brotherhood. (Could he have been the H.M. Stevens who helped to found the Theosophical Society?⁴⁸) Guénon's list of men in the Brotherhood is therefore comprised of Olcott, de Palm, Felt and (possibly) Stevens. This contradicts Mme Blavatsky; she had recognised Olcott as the only white man in the group. The initial centres of activity for the H.B. of L. were certainly at Glasgow and Bath, not at Boston or New York. Furthermore, none of the likely members of the Brotherhood of Luxor is known to have gone on to guide the H.B. of L. Burgoyne and Davidson, in organising the H.B. of L., were certainly industrious in compiling its dogma and lessons. This activity looks like a new beginning, not a continuation of something previously established in America.

Guénon knew that Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott were forced out of the Brotherhood of Luxor,⁴⁹ but did not know that Felt had previously been forced out of the Theosophical Society because he had failed as a demonologist. (Guénon thought that Felt departed New York merely because he had accomplished his occultist mission in forming a group there.) The expulsion of Mme Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott could have been in retaliation for their having embarrassed Felt. These conflicts bear on both the ancestry and the progeny of the Brotherhood of Luxor. In fact, that Brotherhood may have had roots no deeper than Felt's unrealistic promises. The focus on elementals suggests no descent from Randolph, who never emphasised communication with lower spirits. Given Felt's humiliation, the Brotherhood is unlikely to have flourished long enough to have engendered the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor.

As noted, Guénon did not distinguish between the two 'Luxor' groups. He included Emma Hardinge Britten as a member. If she really was another of Felt's initiates, we could understand why she was sympathetic to him and increasingly resentful towards Mme Blavatsky and his other critics. Britten could have been motivated to insult Helena Blavatsky by contriving the evil Helene Laval in *Ghost Land*. After the founding of the

Theosophical Society, Britten and her husband travelled to California and embarked on a lecture tour of the Sandwich Islands, New Zealand and Australia. In 1881 the couple finally settled in England. Britten had written *Modern American Spiritualism* (New York, 1870) and now continued the chronicle in *Nineteenth Century Miracles* (Manchester, 1884). She founded and edited a journal, *The Two Worlds*. In its pages she gave a positive review to Burgoyne's *The Light of Egypt*, although it should be noted that her support does not indicate that she was a member of his Brotherhood or that she had met him personally. It is probably accurate to say that she belonged to the Brotherhood of Luxor, but not to the H.B. of L. She continued to publish on spiritualism and occultism. Early in 1892 she stopped publishing her Manchester journal; she replaced it with *The Unseen Universe*, which lasted only until March 1893. She died on 2 October 1899.

Guénon knew that 'Luxor' was an occultist term and not really a reference to a city, whether in Egypt or in Baloochistan. The hidden reference is to the astral light: 'light' is *lux* in Latin, or in Hebrew.⁵⁰ This concept of a pervasive but unseen energy, as we noted in [Chapter 1](#), is directly descended from Mesmer's hypothetical 'magnetic fluid'. As used in the H.B. of L., the word 'Luxor' had several connotations: it referred to the Astral Plane, attainable not only through Egyptian Hermetism, but through 'magnetic mirrors', the 'magnetic influences' of the planets and the 'astral keys' of the Taro.

CHAPTER 4

The Golden Dawn Rises

The Cypher Manuscript

It was in 1886 that Westcott obtained the celebrated document known as the Cypher MS.¹ This consisted of nearly sixty loose sheets, unnumbered² and written in cipher, save that Hebrew letters, in clear, are used for the many Hebrew words and as numerals; some of the sheets bear a watermark of 1809. Westcott, whose knowledge of occult literature was considerable, recognised the cipher as an alchemical one given by Trithemius in his *Polygraphia*;³ if he had not, there would have been no Golden Dawn. The MS proved to be written in English from right to left. When Westcott had transcribed it, he found himself with a complete blueprint for the foundation of a magical order. Its name was given as the Order of the Golden Dawn; the Hebrew version of this was stated as being ChABRATH 'ZERECh AUR BOQER'.⁴ This name was borrowed from a Masonic lodge founded in Frankfurt in 1808 after the French conquest, the Loge de l'Aurore naissante, or, in German, Loge zur aufgehenden Morgenröthe (Lodge of the Rising Dawn). The lodge had had a mixed Jewish and Christian membership. Both French and English, but not German, Freemasonry officially admitted Jews; in 1817, after the defeat of Napoleon, the lodge obtained a warrant from the Duke of Sussex on behalf of the United Grand Lodge of London.⁵ After Lytton's death in 1873, Westcott was to say of him that he 'had been admitted as a Frater of the German Rosicrucian College at Frankfort on the Main',⁶ but there is no reason to believe this.

Westcott almost certainly lied about how he obtained the Cypher MS, claiming that he had acquired it in August 1887 from the Reverend A.F.A. Woodford, and that Woodford had informed him that it 'had passed through Lévi's hands'.⁷ The Reverend Adolphus Woodford was an elderly clergyman of the Church of England, who had written on Masonic subjects but was not a member of the Soc. Ros.; he had died on 23 December 1887.

The MS itself makes no claim to be of great age, and cannot have been, since, as pointed out by Darcy Küntz, the original version contained a reference to the ancient Egyptian Ritual of the Dead, first published in 1842.⁸ But it is unlikely that Westcott forged it, and he may well at first have sincerely believed in its antiquity. It was surely his acquisition of it that inspired him to found the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, whose practice, doctrine, structure and even name it provided. This was Westcott's chance to create a secret order of his own, one of which he would be the undisputed master, and in which its members would have unwavering faith.

The contents of the Cypher MS may be classified according to whether they were or were not observed by the Golden Dawn when it came into being; a few features were observed initially and then forgotten. They may also be classified according to whether they were or were not derived or suggested by the book of 1781 by the Magister Pianco,⁹ on which the MS relies heavily. This book, *Der Rosenkreuzer in seiner Blöße* (*The Rosicrucian Stripped Bare*), gives a great deal of information about the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross (referred to at the end of [Chapter 0](#) and discussed at the beginning of [Chapter 2](#)), though it is strongly critical of it. Through its borrowings from Pianco, the MS did transmit some features of a more ancient tradition, though not because it had itself been composed in the late XVIII century, as Westcott taught.

The MS consists principally of abbreviated sketches of rituals for admitting candidates to a series of grades, followed, in some cases, by a summary of knowledge needed to pass from one grade to the next. The Tarot is first mentioned as part of the knowledge to be acquired by a Zelator: first the 22 trumps, and then the four suits, which are listed with their correspondences to the French ones as: Wands or Batons = Diamonds; Cups = Hearts; Swords = Spades; and Pentacles or Coins = Clubs.¹⁰ The association between the Italian and French suits, which derives from Etteilla, is perverse; when French-suited Tarot cards were introduced in the mid-XVIII century, the 'long' suits of Swords and Batons were treated as corresponding to the black ones, and the 'round' suits of Cups and Coins to the red ones.¹¹ The H.B. of L. association was much better.

There is, in addition, a six-page disquisition on the Tarot, on smaller sheets, which will be described later. On the first page of the first

ceremony, that for admission of a Neophyte, the Hierophant addresses the assembled company as ‘fratres & sorores of this temple of the golden dawn’, and on the last page as ‘sorores fratresque’ (‘Sisters and Brothers’),¹² indicating, as Ellic Howe remarks,¹³ that, in contrast to a Masonic lodge or a body such as the S.R.I.A. composed only of Masons, it was to contain women as well as men. This was not copied from Pianco, but it was followed by the Golden Dawn, which, from its foundation, admitted women; in fact, some of its most important members were women. Members addressed and referred to one another as ‘Frater’ and ‘Soror’.

The rituals are both Rosicrucian and Cabalistic. What marks them as ‘Rosicrucian’ is the system of grades used. In the article on Rosicrucianism in his *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, Mackenzie listed the nine grades and included a table showing their various attributes, of which he said that ‘it has never before been published, and has been specially constructed by the editor for this work’.¹⁴ In fact, as first remarked by F.L. Gardner in 1903,¹⁵ the table was taken, with very little change, from one given in the book by Magister Pianco;¹⁶ the grades were those used by the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross from 1767 onwards, and corresponded to those used in the S.R.I.A. and its Scottish forebear. The Cypher MS gives rituals for admission to the grades from Zelator to Philosophus, and for an additional preliminary grade of Neophyte. It does not list the higher grades, but, on a page specifying the seating plan in a temple,¹⁷ allows for ‘Adepts’ of higher grade than Philosophus.

The First Order of the Golden Dawn comprised all the grades from Neophyte to Philosophus, and based its admission ceremonies on those given in the Cypher MS. The knowledge requirements given in the Cypher MS may have been inspired by a column in Magister Pianco's table which Mackenzie did not reproduce in his *Cyclopaedia*,¹⁸ laying down the knowledge possessed by the holders of the successive grades, though there is no correspondence whatever in content. The idea formed a central part of the Golden Dawn's practice: each aspirant to a higher grade had first to pass an examination on the knowledge he had had to acquire, by lectures and papers circulated to him, in his existing grade.

It is only the system of grades, together with the reliance on Pianco, that makes the Cypher MS Rosicrucian: but, while it invokes many other components of the magical tradition – the Chaldean Oracles, alchemy and

the four kinds of elemental – it is Cabalistic through and through. Éliphas Lévi had thoroughly integrated the Cabala into his magical system, and had also incorporated the Tarot into it by associating it with the Cabala, and, in particular, the 22 trumps with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; but the Cypher MS, faithfully followed in this by the Golden Dawn, did much more. It refers several times to the ten *sephiroth*,¹⁹ and, more importantly, to the Tree of Life.²⁰ The vital step is its explicit association of each grade above that of Neophyte with one of the ten *sephiroth*, starting with the lowest *sephira*, Malkuth, numbered 10, associated with the first grade, Zelator, and proceeding upwards. Since the magical careers of the members of the Hermetic Order consisted in advancement from grade to grade, this had the effect of making them conceive of their entire lives as magicians as an ascent up the Tree of Life. The idea may possibly have been suggested by Magister Pianco's table, in which each grade has two numbers, running from '9, 1' for Junior (corresponding to Zelator) through '8, 2' for Theoreticus and so on up to '1, 9' for Magus; the explanatory note lamely remarks that the numbers add up to the highest Cabalistic number, 10. In the Cypher MS, a similar double numeration is used, with the order of the numerals reversed and an equals sign in place of the comma. The grade of Zelator thus receives the designation '1 = 10', the Theoricus grade that of '2 = 9' and so on; the numerals used in the MS are Hebrew ones, consisting of letters of the alphabet. The first of the two numbers represents the rank of the grade, the second the *sephira* with which it is associated. The Neophyte grade is numbered '0 = 0' (in the MS, the word 'nought' is written in full). On two pages²¹ of the ritual for admission to the Zelator grade, the first number is enclosed in a circle and the second in a square, thus:

$$\textcircled{1} = \boxed{10}$$

The Golden Dawn at first followed this practice for all the grades, using Arabic numerals; later the form '1° = 10°' was employed, eventually simplified to '1° = 10°' or just '1 = 10'.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn proper comprised the grades from 0° = 0° Neophyte to 4° = 7° Philosophus, admission rituals for which were set out in the Cypher MS. The three grades of Adepts, from 5° = 6° to 7° = 4°, made up the Second or Inner Order, whose proper title was Ordo

Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross). The First or Outer Order was governed by three Chiefs of grade $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$, and the Second Order by three Chiefs of grade $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$; these were in fact the same three individuals, but this was not known, at least officially, to members of the First Order. If the instruction on seating in the temple was part of the original Cypher MS, its author certainly envisaged a grade of $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$, since three Chiefs of that grade are mentioned on that page;^{[22](#)} in this case, this was what prompted the founders of the Golden Dawn to furnish it with three Chiefs at the outset. The distinction between the First and Second Orders is explicit in the MS. Rituals of admission are sketched only up to the grade $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$ Philosophus; the section on the grade $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$ concludes with the words ‘end of first order’,^{[23](#)} implying the existence of a Second, while that on the admission of a Neophyte expressly admonishes the successful candidate that there will be ‘no advance except by permit of second order’.^{[24](#)}

Above the grades $8^{\circ} = 3^{\circ}$ Magister Templi and $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$ Magus, the Golden Dawn added a new tenth grade, $10^{\circ} = 1^{\circ}$ Ipsissimus; these three together constituted the Third Order. In contrast to the S.R.I.A., the original dispensation did not envisage anyone's reaching any of these exalted grades. The Third Order consisted solely of Secret Chiefs, human beings who had attained a superhuman state of existence; they were, Westcott explained, ‘the Great Rulers of the whole System’, ‘shrouded and unapproachable ... to all ... but the Chiefs of the Adepts’.^{[25](#)} These Secret Chiefs were descended from the Unknown Superiors of the Golden and Rosy Cross; the concept derived originally from Freemasonry, in particular the Rite of Strict Observance.^{[26](#)} It seems probable that the author of the Cypher MS also envisaged a grade of $10^{\circ} = 1^{\circ}$, although it is not mentioned; given the association of the grades with the *sephiroth*, he can hardly have conceived of $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$ as the highest grade. The belief in Secret Chiefs did not play a salient part in the thought and life of the members of the Golden Dawn, as it came to do in some of the later magical orders that succeeded to it. Since the Secret Chiefs were believed to communicate with none below the three Chiefs, they were of no practical concern to the rest of the membership. They were important only inasmuch as these further sources of authority and instruction constituted the final authentication of the teaching received within the Order.

The heavy dependence of the Cypher MS on the version of Magister Pianco's table given in Mackenzie's *Cyclopaedia* is illustrated by the conferral on each candidate attaining a new grade of one of the fanciful 'Brotherhood names' given in a column of Mackenzie's table so headed. Thus the names for grades 1 to 4 are 'Pereclinus de Faustis', 'Porajus de Rejectis', 'Monoceros de astris' ('Unicorn from the Stars') and 'Pharos illuminans' ('Shining Lighthouse').²⁷ These names do appear in the corresponding column of Pianco's table, which, however, is headed 'Brotherhood name of the Chief (*Vorsteher*)': in the Golden and Rosy Cross, each grade had its own chief. Mackenzie appears, through careless reading, to have quite misunderstood the meaning of this column; and the compiler of the Cypher MS had misunderstood it in exactly the same way. These 'Brotherhood names' were conferred on the candidates in the Golden Dawn rituals of admission, and referred to as 'Mystic Titles', but they were not otherwise used; each member had to choose a motto, usually in Latin, for use as his personal name in the Order.

The fact that the last line of the last ritual in the Cypher MS reads 'end of first order' raises a further question: is the Cypher MS, as we have it and as Westcott had it, complete? Did its author compose rituals for the admission of Adepts, missing from the MS obtained by Westcott? Did he perhaps never intend to compose them? Or had he simply not got around to doing so?

Which version of the Tree of Life did the author of the Cypher MS have in mind? He takes it for granted, without specifying it, presumably because he was assuming it to be recognised as standard; but there can be no doubt that it is the version, unusual among Hebrew Cabalists, given by Athanasius Kircher (see fig. 5 of [Chapter 0](#)). The MS refers repeatedly to the *sephiroth* as ten in number, numbering them from 1 to 10 in the standard order, followed by Kircher and most authorities; it thus does not treat Daath as an ordinary *sephira*.²⁸ The pathways, called simply 'paths', are numbered from 11 to 32, and not, as by Kircher, from 1 to 22. Yet the numbering accords with the order given to the pathways by Kircher and with his assignments of Hebrew letters to them, as do the attributions of Tarot trumps to them. From this and from the *sephiroth* from and to which the pathways are said to proceed, it is evident that it is Kircher's version of the Tree that the author of the Cypher MS is assuming it to be unnecessary to specify.²⁹ It was this version of the Tree and allocation of letters and

trumps to the pathways, based on the diagram in Kircher's book, that the Golden Dawn regarded as canonical; we shall see that occasional deviationists in this regard were treated as heretics. Except in one respect, members of the Golden Dawn showed no awareness that alternative versions of the Tree, and different allocations of Hebrew letters to the pathways, had long been customary among Jewish students of the Cabala. The exception is the Lurianic form of the Tree with Daath as a full-fledged *sephira*, as shown in fig. 6 of [Chapter 0](#). On the last page of the ritual for admission to the grade of Philosophus in the Cypher MS, the candidate is shown this diagram of the 'paths with Daath';^{[30](#)} rough sketches of Rosenroth's diagram XVI, as in our fig. 6, are drawn on two subsequent pages.^{[31](#)} But this was certainly not intended to be the principal version of the Tree followed in the new Order, and very little attention was paid to it in the Golden Dawn, save, it appears, in the Temple founded by Felkin in New Zealand.^{[32](#)}

The Cypher MS includes in the necessary knowledge of a Practicus the association of the ten Hebrew orders of angels with the *sephiroth*; as further evidence of the reliance of the MS on Kircher, the angelic orders are listed in the unusual sequence given by him.^{[33](#)} In subsequent G.D. lore, the *sephiroth* were brought into being by the Lightning Flash striking downwards, while the pathways were formed by the upward ascent of the serpent among them. In the Cypher MS, the Mosaic serpent Nehushtan is shown to the candidate for the grade of Philosophus; the diagram appears to depict it ascending the Tree.^{[34](#)} To a candidate for the grade of Zelator a picture of what was known in the Golden Dawn as the Lightning Flash is explained, but the name given to it is the 'Flaming Sword of Kerubim' (presumably those who barred entry to Paradise after the Fall); the very sketchy diagram may show it coming down the Tree.^{[35](#)}

The secret attribution

The essay on the Tarot,^{[36](#)} always called 'the Tarot lecture' in the Golden Dawn, is written, not in the note form of the rituals and knowledge summaries, but in continuous pseudo-Biblical prose, even down to the use of forms such as 'cometh' and 'thy'. Though it uses the same unusual alchemical cipher, it is written, not on quarto paper like the rest of the Cypher MS, but on smaller notebook sheets.^{[37](#)} The Tarot trumps are

referred to as ‘atus or mansions of Thoth’, whereas everywhere else in the MS they are called ‘keys’. The essay was therefore probably not meant to be connected with the rituals, but was a distinct composition. It was surely intended for the same secret order, however, since it is addressed to a ‘Practicus of our ancient Order’. In the main text of the MS, on the last page on the knowledge required to attain the grade of Philosophus, headed ‘synonyms in tarot divination’, a table lists the Hebrew letters, the associated Tarot trumps, with their names and numbers, pathways and elements, planets or zodiacal signs. We may call it the ‘synonym table’ to distinguish it from the similar table given in the Tarot lecture, which we may call the ‘lecture table’. The far from standard associations are all as in the lecture table.³⁸

The Tarot lecture begins by stating that the ten numeral cards of each suit represent the ten *sephiroth*, the four suits the four Cabalistic worlds and the sixteen court cards the fourfold Tetragrammaton. The rest of the lecture is concerned with the trumps, correlated with the pathways on the Tree of Life and so with the 22 letters, classified as three mother letters, associated with elements; seven doubles, associated with planets; and twelve singles, associated with signs of the zodiac. Lévi had correlated the Tarot trumps with the Hebrew letters; the Cypher MS was the first text to correlate them with the pathways.

When the Order of the Golden Dawn was formed, it had to have secret doctrines, gradually revealed to initiates as they advanced through the grades, that could not be found in any published books; as Aleister Crowley later sardonically remarked, it is no use swearing people to terrible oaths not to reveal what they are going to learn, and then teaching them the Hebrew alphabet. One of its most important secrets was the secret attribution of the Tarot trumps, summarily set out in the Cypher MS as knowledge to be acquired by a Practicus, and in detail in the Tarot lecture. The word ‘attribution’ was used in the Golden Dawn to denote a method of assigning the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to the individual trumps and so to the 22 pathways, and has become the standard occultist term for this. Such an ‘attribution’ is of fundamental significance to the occult theory of the Tarot, since it determines how that theory can be interwoven with the Cabala, and hence how the trumps are to be interpreted.

The first to propose an attribution of Hebrew letters to trumps had been the comte de Mellet, the author of an essay on the Tarot printed by Court de Gébelin, after his own essay on the subject, in his *Monde primitif*, Vol. VIII, of 1781. The attribution proposed in the Tarot lecture was quite new, contradicting that propounded by Éliphas Lévi and everybody else. It agreed with Lévi, as against de Mellet, in arranging the trumps in ascending numerical order for the purpose. The principle underlying it was very simple: to remove the Fool from between the XX and the XXI, where Lévi had placed it, and set it at the very beginning of the sequence. The effect of this was to upset Lévi's assignments of Hebrew letters to every card but the XXI. There was one other detail: trump VIII (Justice) was to be interchanged with trump XI (Strength); the interchange might simply affect the assignment of Hebrew letters and, consequently, the astrological associations, or the two cards might actually be renumbered. In the following table the numbering remains that of the Tarot de Marseille, followed by French occultists such as Lévi and Papus; 0 represents the Fool. The table shows the result of the revisions by the Cypher MS.

	de Mellet	Lévi	H.B. of L.	Cypher MS
<i>Aleph</i>	XXI	I	I	0
<i>Beth</i>	XX	II	II	I
<i>Gimel</i>	XIX	III	III	II
<i>Daleth</i>	XVIII	IV	IV	III
<i>He</i>	XVII	V	V	IV
<i>Vau</i>	XVI	VI	VI	V
<i>Zain</i>	XV	VII	VII	VI
<i>Heth</i>	XIV	VIII	VIII	VII
<i>Teth</i>	XIII	IX	IX	XI

	de Mellet	Lévi	H.B. of L.	Cypher MS
<i>Yod</i>	XII	X	X	IX
<i>Kaph</i>	XI	XI	XI	X
<i>Lamed</i>	X	XII	XII	VIII
<i>Mem</i>	IX	XIII	XIII	XII
<i>Nun</i>	VIII	XIV	XIV	XIII
<i>Samekh</i>	VII	XV	XV	XIV
<i>Ain</i>	VI	XVI	XVI	XV
<i>Pe</i>	V	XVII	XVII	XVI
<i>Tzaddi</i>	IV	XVIII	XVIII	XVII
<i>Qoph</i>	III	XIX	XIX	XVIII
<i>Resh</i>	II	XX	XX	XIX
<i>Shin</i>	I	0	XXI	XX
<i>Tau</i>	0	XXI	0	XXI

Why were Justice and Strength interchanged? To establish astrological correspondences for the trumps, the Cypher MS relied on the *Sepher Yetzirah*, as Lévi and Papus had done; but, since it attributed the Hebrew letters differently, the elements, signs of the zodiac and planets were also reassigned (save that the Moon was still assigned to trump II and Venus to trump III). Another table will make this clear.

Sefer Yetzirah	Papus	Cypher MS
<i>Aleph</i> (air)	I	0 (Mat/Fool)
<i>Beth</i> (PLANET)	II MOON	I (Pagad/Juggler) MERCURY
<i>Gimel</i> (PLANET)	III VENUS	II (High Priestess) MOON
<i>Daleth</i> (PLANET)	IV JUPITER	III (Empress) VENUS
<i>He</i> (Aries)	V	IV (Emperor)
<i>Vau</i> (Taurus)	VI	V (Hierophant)
<i>Zain</i> (Gemini)	VII	VI (Lovers)
<i>Heth</i> (Cancer)	VIII	VII (Chariot)
<i>Teth</i> (Leo)	IX	VIII (Justice)
<i>Yod</i> (Virgo)	X	IX (Hermit)
<i>Kaph</i> (PLANET)	XI MARS	X (Wheel) JUPITER
<i>Lamed</i> (Libra)	XII	XI (Strength)
<i>Mem</i> (water)	XIII	XII (Man Hanged)
<i>Nun</i> (Scorpio)	XIV	XIII (Death)
<i>Samekh</i> (Sagitt.)	XV	XIV (Temperance)
<i>Ain</i> (Capricorn)	XVI	XV (Devil)
<i>Pe</i> (PLANET)	XVII MERCURY	XVI (Tower) MARS
<i>Tzaddi</i> (Aquar.)	XVIII	XVII (Star)
<i>Qoph</i> (Pisces)	XIX	XVIII (Moon)

<i>Resh</i> (PLANET)	XX SATURN	XIX (Sun) SUN
<i>Shin</i> (fire)	0	XX (Angels)
<i>Tau</i> (PLANET)	XXI SUN	XXI (Universe) SATURN

The trump subjects in the column headed **Papus** should be taken as those traditional in the Tarot de Marseille; those in the last column are the ones given in the lecture table. In the synonym table, the names ‘Mat’ and ‘Pagad’, known to players of Tarot games, are not given for the Fool and trump I; ‘Gemini’, ‘Prudence’ and ‘Rota’ are given as alternative names of trumps VI, IX and X respectively, trump XII is more conventionally called the ‘Hanged Man’, trump XX is called ‘Judgement’ and trump XVI is more explicitly called the ‘Tower struck by lightning’ (with the word ‘lightning’ not written out but indicated graphically).

The lecture table forms one page of the Tarot lecture; the list is in ascending numerical order of the trumps, beginning with 0 (the Fool). The numeration of the trumps is as in the Tarot de Marseille, so that trump VIII is still Justice and trump XI Strength. In the column giving the corresponding Hebrew letters, however, *Teth* and *Lamed* are interchanged, and with them, the associated zodiacal signs Leo and Libra; rather inconsistently, pathways 19 and 22, which should correspond to *Teth* and *Lamed* respectively, are not transposed. The new assignments of letters and zodiacal signs to trumps XI and VIII are thus respected, but the correspondence between letters and pathways is disrupted, probably inadvertently. The assignment of planets differs from that of Lévi and Papus, but this is of lesser importance: the association of elements and zodiacal signs with the Hebrew letters remains the same. Lévi's attribution of Hebrew letters to the trumps, followed by Papus, results in the association of Leo with the Hermit (trump IX) and Libra with the Hanged Man (trump XII). Under the attribution in the Cypher MS, however, Leo would be associated with Justice (trump VIII) and Libra with Strength (trump XI) if these two cards were kept in their traditional places. Surely, however, Leo must be associated with the figure of Strength, opening the mouth of a lion, and Libra with Justice, holding her pair of scales: this was the compelling reason for interchanging those two cards in assigning Hebrew letters to them.

The synonym table handles the matter rather differently. In it, the ordering depends on that of the Hebrew letters, which is not alphabetical: rather, they are listed with the mother letters first, followed by the doubles

and then the singles. *Teth*, correctly correlated with Leo and with pathway 19, is assigned to trump XI; but against it in the column of trump subjects is written 'VIII = Strength'. Likewise, *Lamed*, correctly correlated with Libra and with pathway 22, is assigned to trump VIII, but against it in the column of trump subjects is written 'XI = Justice'. Arrows show that the two trumps are to be interchanged. The notation is ambiguous, but may suggest that they are to be renumbered.

Secrets hinted at

Knowledge of the secret attribution, revealed to the Golden Dawn members when they attained the grade of Practicus, with the injunction that it never be disclosed to any uninitiated person, gave its possessors the sense that they alone had the key to the true interpretation of the Tarot. That key could not be discovered by those outside the Order, however many books they read by acknowledged masters of magical doctrine such as Lévi.

In 1896 Westcott produced a translation of a hitherto unpublished manuscript by Éliphas Lévi, under the title *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum, interpreted by the Tarot Trumps*. This runs through the 22 'keys' of the Tarot in sequence, attaching to each some often loosely connected reflections on magical topics. Westcott added a running commentary to Lévi's text, describing each card and giving interpretations taken from other works of Lévi and from Paul Christian. About the Hanged Man - the only trump Christian's interpretation of which is not cited - he says that it 'is the most closely veiled of all the Tarot hieroglyphics. Its real meaning is now known to but very few; there is the gravest doubt whether Lévi knew it himself. Papus ... gives a clearly faulty explanation. Neither Etteilla nor Court de Gébelin grasped the hidden meaning. But the significance has in some cases been found by clairvoyant visions, and in a few by intuition. The key is held by such as know rightly to which Hebrew letter it belongs and the correspondences of that letter'. It is characteristic of the Golden Dawn that, having thus tantalised his readers, Westcott should leave this secret undisclosed.

In Westcott's Preface to the volume, the mystification was yet more intense. He states that the true attribution of numbers and (Hebrew) letters to the 22 trumps 'are known to but a few students, members of the Hermetic Schools' - he meant the members of the Golden Dawn; those

given by Lévi, Christian and Papus, he says, 'are incorrect, presumably by design'. He adds that he has 'seen a manuscript page of cypher, about 150 years old', which gave a different attribution, found by several occult students, well known to him, 'to satisfy all the conditions required by occult science'. Naturally, he does not reveal what it was. The 'manuscript page' to which he is referring of course came from the Cypher MS.

The topic Westcott thus shrouded in mystery, alluding to it only with dark hints, lay at the very heart of the secret doctrine of the Golden Dawn, one of whose most important components was the 'secret attribution' of the trumps. There was, indeed, a price to be paid for maintaining both that the attribution given by Lévi was incorrect and, as Westcott informed members of the Golden Dawn, that Lévi had seen the Cypher MS, and hence had been privy to the secret: it had to be argued that, in his books, he had deliberately lied about the matter in order to deceive his readers. This was just what Westcott implied when he said in his Preface that the attribution given by Lévi in his writings was 'incorrect, presumably by design': having himself practised deception on his own followers, he presumed that they would not find anything shocking in ascribing such mendacity to Lévi. He was right: they did not. For members of the Golden Dawn, the prime duty was to guard their secrets from the uninitiated: it does not seem to have occurred to them that a simpler method for Lévi to do this would have been not to write any books. To do him justice, there is no reason to suppose that Lévi had any intention of deceiving his readers in this or any other matter: he was aiming to do what he claimed, to reveal the mysteries to all.

Where did the Cypher MS come from?

A.E. Waite was the first to suggest, as one hypothesis among others, that the Cypher MS was composed by Kenneth Mackenzie.³⁹ Since the publication in 1990 of R.A. Gilbert's essay 'Provenance Unknown', which proposed a plausible explanation of how Westcott may have got hold of the MS, this theory has become almost universally accepted. In 1877 Westcott had joined the Swedenborgian Rite which John Yarker had imported from Canada, and to which Kenneth Mackenzie also belonged. By 1882 the Rite had almost become defunct; but in 1886 Westcott wrote to F.G. Irwin that he and Yarker were trying to revive it. When Mackenzie died on 3 July, Westcott wrote at once to his widow, with great

insensitivity, asking for her husband's papers relating to the Rite; during August he received from her three separate consignments of such papers, collected by Mrs Mackenzie from among 'thousands of papers' she had had to sift. It is perfectly possible that the Cypher MS may have been among the papers that Westcott obtained in this way. As R.A. Gilbert and Darcy Küntz both remark, Mackenzie had used the cipher of Trithemius, and his name in the S.R.I.A. was 'Cryptonymus'; his widow Mrs Alexandrina Maud Mackenzie was among the first to join the Golden Dawn, taking the name 'Cryptonyma', in March 1888.

Much tells in favour of Mackenzie's authorship of the Cypher MS, including its misinterpretation of the 'Brotherhood names'. The erudition of the author was indeed great: besides the Book of the Dead, the MS alludes to the Chaldean Oracles, the Mysteries of Samothrace and John Dee's Enochian magic,⁴⁰ with all of which Mackenzie, but few others save Frederick Hockley, would have been familiar. If Mackenzie composed the MS, it was he who devised the secret attribution of Hebrew letters to Tarot trumps and he who first associated the Rosicrucian grades with the Cabalistic *sephiroth*: in a clear sense he was thus the posthumous founder of the Golden Dawn. But his purpose in composing the MS is unclear. Written in cipher, it could not be read at a glance, or at all by the uninformed.⁴¹ Written on old paper, it was intended to deceive: but whom? Can it be that Mackenzie had planned to report his possession of the Cypher MS, or at least of the essay on the Tarot, in his aborted book *The Game of Tarot*, with some fictitious account of its origin and how he had come by it? That book would then have included, as revealed by the MS, what was to become the Golden Dawn's secret attribution; was his cancellation of the book the result of his getting cold feet about practising so large a deception in print? R.A. Gilbert conjectured that the rituals in the MS might have been intended for the Society of Eight;⁴² he later speculated that they were meant for the Sat B'hai, which, unlike most Masonic rites, admitted women.⁴³ The inspiration of the Sat B'hai was supposedly Indian, not Rosicrucian, however; and the theory hardly explains the need to conceal the rituals in cipher or to write them on old paper. In any case, the MS gives the name of the Order whose admission ceremonies it summarises: the Order of the Golden Dawn. If the compiler of the Cypher MS meant the rituals that he sketched to be actually used, he was aiming to create a new magical order. In the event, it was Westcott

who created it, with Mathers as his lieutenant. On 4 October 1887 Westcott wrote to Mathers, saying:

We have no doubt a rich treasure in poor old Woodford's MSS. I hope you will accept co-equality with me and write it up with all your erudition if I will do a simple translation of the cypher. We must then choose a 3rd and endeavour to spread a complete scheme of initiation.^{[44](#)}

Mathers replied two days later, accepting the task, for which Westcott duly paid him. Westcott surely did not tell him how he had really acquired the MS; he himself composed the earliest knowledge lectures for the Order.^{[45](#)} Mathers suggested, as the third Chief, Dr William Robert Woodman (1829-1891), who had been Supreme Magus of the S.R.I.A. since Little's death in 1878.^{[46](#)}

In the meantime, both Westcott and Mathers had published translations of key Cabalistic works which were to be of great assistance to members of the new Order. In 1887 Westcott brought out with Robert Fryar of Bath his translations of *Sepher Yetzirah the Book of Formation* and *The Thirty-two Paths of Wisdom*^{[47](#)} in a single volume, while in the same year Mathers published in London *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, a partial translation of Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*, and so made a great part of the *Zohar* available to English-speaking readers.

The foundation of the Golden Dawn

Westcott set about the creation of the new Order with the most careful planning. The natural sciences claim to know on the basis of observation and experiment, mathematics on the basis of deductive reasoning, religion on the basis of divine revelation. The occult sciences claim a basis different from all these: a secret tradition passed on through the ages from adept to adept and guarded from the uninitiated. An occult society can therefore fulfil its role only if it can persuade its members that it is in possession of this secret knowledge; and it can do this best by exhibiting a pedigree showing it to be continuous with secret orders with a long history and a claim to have had access to yet more ancient esoteric wisdom.

Westcott went to the greatest pains to provide the Golden Dawn with such a pedigree. He invented a German lady, Fräulein A. Sprengel,^{[48](#)} a member of the Orden der goldenen Dämmerung (Order of the Golden Dawn), whose Order motto was 'Sapiens dominabitur Astris'. R.A. Gilbert

has made the interesting discovery that this motto appears on the original title-page of Valentin Weigel's *Astrologie Theologized*, London (1649).⁴⁹ The volume was reprinted in 1886, edited by Anna Kingsford, who founded the Hermetic Society in 1884 and died on 22 February 1888. Gilbert perceptively conjectures that Westcott may have modelled Fräulein Sprengel on her.

A page of the Cypher MS, almost certainly not part of the original, and reading from left to right,⁵⁰ runs:

sap dom ast is a chief
among the members of die
goldene dammerung she is
a famous soror her name
is fraulein sprengel. letters
reach her at herr j enger
hotel marquart. [who lived there often]
stutugart
she is 7 = 4 or a chief adept

The words in square brackets are in ordinary clear script, in Westcott's hand, and the second **u** of 'stutugart', which is obviously meant to be 'stuttgart', appears to be crossed out. The alleged copy, also in Westcott's hand, of Woodford's covering letter sent with the Cypher MS, dated 8 August 1887, says:

It [the MS] confers upon the possessor who understands the meaning to grant the old Rosicrucian secrets and the grades of Hê eôs chrysê; or Golden Dawn. Try to see old Soror 'Sapiens dominabitur astris' in Germany. She did live at Ulm.⁵¹

We may safely assume this letter to be a fabrication by Westcott: the supposed original is not in existence.

Westcott, assisted in translation by a Mr Albert Essinger, then began a correspondence with the non-existent German lady adept. He first wrote (or purported to write) to her on 12 October 1887;⁵² her reply, 'received' on 26 November 1887, raised him to the grade of 7° = 4° of the Second Order and authorised him to found a temple of the order of the Golden Dawn in England (l'Aube dorée in France and die goldene Dämmerung in Germany, she said) and to select two others to be, with him, its Chiefs; Westcott's letter of 4 October to Mathers shows that this was precisely

what he was already planning to do. Fräulein Sprengel's letter also confirmed that the Cypher MS had been in Lévi's hands.⁵³ She wrote again on 25 January 1888, authorising Westcott to sign her motto to any necessary documents, and encouragingly on 7 February.⁵⁴ Woodman agreed to accept nomination as the third Chief of the Order. Accordingly, a warrant was signed on 1 March 1888 by Deo Duce Comite Ferro ⑦=④ (Mathers), Sapiens Dom Astris ⑦=④ (Frl Sprengel) and Vincit Omnia Veritas ⑦=④ (Woodman) to establish the Isis-Urania temple of the Order of the Golden Dawn, to be ruled by 'S Rioghail Mo Dhream ⑤=⑥ (Mathers), Quod Scis Nescis ⑤=⑥ (Westcott) and Magna Est Veritas Et Praevalebit ⑤=⑥ (Woodman).⁵⁵ As he had been authorised to do, Westcott signed Fräulein Sprengel's motto. The 7° = 4^{sq} mottoes of Mathers and Woodman were those of two of the three Chiefs; the 5° = 6^{sq} ones were those of the officers of the temple of the First or Outer Order; before members attained the Second Order, they were not to know that these officers were identical with the chiefs.

Thus the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded, from the outset admitting both women and men who were not Masons. The investigations of Ellic Howe have set it beyond doubt that the letters from Fräulein Sprengel were forged at Westcott's behest. This is corroborated by the judgement of Mr Christopher Wells, an expert on the German language who has kindly examined photographs of the letters and concludes that although 'the language is fluent', they were 'probably written by a non-German, possibly an Englishman with a very good knowledge of German, not, however, flawless'. Of the fact that the letters had been forged Mathers may or may not have been aware at that time, though he certainly knew it later; but the members of the Golden Dawn had no doubts about them. They believed that their group formed the branch in Britain of a secret Rosicrucian order already flourishing in Germany and continuous with the original Confraternity. Not for them the healthy scepticism we have seen evinced by members of the S.R.I.A. They believed in the real existence of Christian Rosenkreutz and in the whole legend concerning him, and thought themselves to belong to the Brotherhood he had founded and to be heirs of the wisdom he had acquired during his mysterious journeys in the East. In Westcott's 'Historic Lecture for Neophytes', circulated to all who joined the Golden Dawn, 'Eliphaz

Lévi'⁵⁶ was among several named as recent Adepts of the Order, expressly declared to be continuous with the 'Fratres R.C. of Germany ... founded by one Christian Rosenkreuz so far back as the year 1398', but drawing on a tradition of far more ancient secret knowledge into which Moses himself had been initiated. Those who joined the Golden Dawn could feel assured, as the members of few other magical orders had been, that they were privy to a secret tradition stretching back through the millennia. The teaching they received was doubly authenticated: by this continuity and by the ancient document from which their rituals were drawn. It was on this cracked base - an elaborate forgery and an inauthentic manuscript - that the Golden Dawn was founded; but for a dozen years its members suspected no flaw.

Mathers, who had a brilliant flair for the histrionic, had done a fine job of composing the Order's rituals of admission to the first five grades on the basis of the summaries in the Cypher MS. He subsequently supplied ceremonies for the Equinox and for Corpus Christi (the original day for an assembly of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood) that had not been sketched in the MS. His impressive rites contributed greatly to making membership of the Golden Dawn a vividly exciting experience. In the course of the ritual for admitting a Neophyte, the candidate had to kneel before the altar. With one hand on a sacred symbol and the other held by the Chief, he swore an oath of Obligation to keep secret any information relative to the Order 'under the awful penalty of voluntarily submitting myself to a deadly and hostile Current of Will set in motion by the Chiefs of the Order by which I should fall slain or paralysed without visible weapon, as if blasted by the Lightning Flash'.⁵⁷ In the first month of its existence, there were admitted to the Order six members besides the Chiefs, including Theresa Jane O'Connell, Mrs Mackenzie and, the most important, Mathers' future wife Mina Bergson, who adopted the motto 'Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum' and became generally known within the Order as 'Vestigia'. The Reverend W.A. Ayton, aged 73, joined in July, and his wife with him.⁵⁸

Westcott 'received' three more communications from Fräulein Sprengel: one of 12 September 1888, regretting her inability to attend the Equinox festival; one of 9 October 1889, and one dated 12 December 1889, but mysteriously received only on 20 March 1890.⁵⁹ This last conferred the grade of 7° = 4° on all three Chiefs; it had been conferred on Westcott in the first letter, while the warrant for Isis-Urania shows the other two as

having assumed it already. Finally, on 23 August 1890 another German Brother wrote to inform Westcott of the death of S.D.A., adding that other Chiefs, disapproving of the warrant to the London temple, would not be communicating with him.⁶⁰ Soror Sapiens Dominabitur Astris had exhausted her usefulness.

CHAPTER 5

The Brightness of the Golden Dawn

Initial progress

It is with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn that the introduction of Tarot occultism into Britain is principally bound up. We know more about it than about any other magical order, thanks to the large number of documents and letters between its members that have survived. The Order lasted only a little more than a decade before disintegrating into hostile factions; but while it lasted, it was by far the most successful occult society ever created.¹ Woodman was much older than the other two Chiefs, and was never more than a figurehead; the Order was run from the outset by Westcott and Mathers between them. The success of the Golden Dawn was due to the remarkable combination of these two. In the game of bridge two partners may hold hands of cards, neither impressive in itself, that fit together so perfectly as to yield an irresistible slam. That was what happened with Westcott and Mathers, both inadequate human beings, neither equipped with talents that would have seemed in any way outstanding, but, in combination, producing a result of genius. Surely they could not have co-operated with success in any enterprise other than the foundation of a secret magical order; and surely neither would have had a tenth of the success in that without the other.

Having attained any of the grades, a frater or soror had to absorb instruction in the magical doctrine revealed at that grade, having sworn a solemn oath not to divulge it to anyone not of that grade or higher. This of course reinforced the sense of being privy to secret knowledge handed down from antiquity and guarded from the uninitiated. To advance from any grade to the next, it was necessary to pass an examination in the teaching so acquired and then to be admitted to the higher grade in one of the rituals which Westcott had sketched, following the Cypher MS, and which Mathers had written up, conducted in one of the Order's temples. These temples were institutions rather than buildings. The first three were

inaugurated in March 1888: the Isis-Urania Temple in London; the Horus Temple in Bradford, of which T.H. Pattinson was a leading member; and the Osiris Temple in Weston-super-Mare, with Benjamin Cox as its principal figure. The Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh was founded in 1893, its chief members being the astronomer William Peck and the landowner and lawyer R.W. Felkin. The Ahathoor Temple was established in Paris in 1894.

Mathers was greatly helped in his endeavours by his wife. In 1890 he had married Mina Bergson (1865-1928), who thereafter used the form Moina for her given name. She was the sister of the famous French philosopher Henri Bergson; he was the eldest and she the fourth of the seven children of Jewish parents who, at the time of Mina's birth, were living in Geneva. Their father was a gifted pianist who never achieved success. The family moved to Paris in 1867 and to London in 1873, where they remained. In 1880 Mina, a handsome girl with tousled hair and an intense look, began to study at the Slade School of Art; two years later, Annie Horniman (1860-1937) joined the School. The two young women became close friends. Mina completed her course in 1886, and rented a studio with a friend. It was at the British Museum, which she was visiting to study ancient Egyptian art, that she met Mathers.²

Mina Bergson ('Bergie') told Annie Horniman ('Tabbie') about her new acquaintance, assuring her that she would *not* marry him. He quickly interested her in the occult, however, and in March 1888 she became one of the first four recruits to be initiated into the Golden Dawn. At about the same time she introduced her friend Tabbie to Mathers, and she too became interested in the occult: Annie Horniman enrolled in the Golden Dawn in June 1890. We do not know when Mathers proposed or when Mina accepted him: but how could they marry with no source of income between them? It was Annie Horniman who made it financially possible, and in June 1890 they were married. The Reverend W.A. Ayton and his wife had joined the Golden Dawn in July 1888,³ and the wedding took place in Ayton's Oxfordshire church. It was to be a strange marriage. At least according to Moina Mathers, it was never consummated: yet throughout her life she remained passionately devoted to her husband and, after his death, to his memory and his reputation; and she continued a convinced adherent of his teachings until her own death in 1928.

Annie Horniman was born into a wealthy family. Its fortune derived from the Horniman Tea Company, founded by her grandfather John Horniman. Her father, Frederick Horniman, who became a Liberal MP, collected on his travels the materials for the museum which now bears his name, but which in 1901 was a purely private collection. Annie had one brother, who married in 1886. She herself, a somewhat plain woman, never married; but she probably contributed more to human happiness than any other member of the Hermetic Order. The Horniman family was inclined to a puritan outlook, but Annie early developed a lifelong passion for the theatre, to which she made great contributions, founding the famous Abbey Theatre, Dublin, in 1904, and, as owner of the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester, from 1908 to 1921, pioneering repertory theatre in England. Her most outstanding trait was generosity, usually carefully hidden from others and sometimes from the recipients themselves. It was manifested in great degree after she received a legacy from her grandfather when he died in 1893. She once said, 'I am merely a custodian of the money I control',⁴ and the remark was not mere priggish piety, but a principle on which she consistently acted all her life. She was not in the least 'soft', however. On the contrary, although she rebelled against her father's authoritarian attitudes, she was intensely self-disciplined, and firm in opposing whatever she thought wrong.

At the Slade, Annie Horniman decided that she herself had little artistic talent, but that Mina Bergson had much. When Mina became engaged to Mathers, Annie found a way to help. In 1889 or early 1890 she persuaded her father to offer Mathers a post at his private museum. With it went occupancy of a nearby house, Stent Lodge: it was this that enabled him to marry Mina Bergson.⁵ Once a member of the Golden Dawn, Annie Horniman became devoted to its teachings and rituals; she was a very active member of the Order and soon came to occupy an important position in it, being made Sub-Praemonstratrix of the Isis-Urania Temple in 1892.

Early in 1891, Mathers was dismissed from his post at the Horniman Museum, possibly because Frederick Horniman had found out about his activities as a magician. Annie Horniman supported the pair financially, but urged Moina Mathers to go to Paris, where she could develop her artistic gifts without the distraction of her husband's demands. In Christmas week, 1891, Dr Woodman died, to be succeeded as Supreme

Magus of the Soc. Ros. by Westcott. Woodman was buried in Willesden cemetery, where, according to Westcott, 'a suitable Rosicrucian inscription may be read upon his tombstone'.⁶ Since he had never been more than a figurehead, it did not occur to Westcott or Mathers to replace him in the Golden Dawn, and henceforward they were the only Chiefs of the Order (apart, of course, from the Secret Chiefs).

The Second Order

In January 1892, Annie Horniman gave Moina Mathers money to go to Paris, and in March sent her more money and the fare to Venice, so that she could join Moina in a holiday there. Moina Mathers returned to London in May; a few days later, she did indeed leave to settle in Paris, but accompanied by her husband, which had not been Annie Horniman's intention. Henceforth he superintended the Golden Dawn from afar, making periodical visits to London for the main ceremonies. His explanation was that he had been ordered to live in Paris by the Secret Chiefs. For the next four years, the Mathers couple subsisted upon generous remittances sent to them by Annie Horniman; but Moina did not find that the conditions of their life in Paris gave her any opportunity of seriously advancing her artistic career. Annie Horniman became Mathers' personal representative in Britain; in 1892 she was sent by Westcott to deal with two obstreperous members of the Horus Temple in Bradford who esteemed the Theosophical Society more highly than the Golden Dawn.⁷

By the end of 1891 25 members, having attained the $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$ grade, had had conferred on them the higher grade of $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ Adeptus Minor by the simple process of passing further examinations, without any initiation ceremony. By the explanations they had originally been given, this was the lowest grade of the Second or inner Order,⁸ but, according to Flying Roll No. 1, a document issued by Westcott in 1892, they were declared to be merely 'nominal' $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ members, at the top of the First Order.⁹ There was in fact no ceremony for admission to grade $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$, since the Cypher MS had described none. Mathers, with some help from Westcott, set to work to devise such a ceremony. When it was ready, the Second Order was formally established under the name of Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis (the Order of the Red Rose and the Golden Cross), or R.R. et A.C. for short; its members, other than the three Chiefs, comprised only those

Adepti Minores who had undergone the new rite of admission. The first to do so was Annie Horniman, on 7 December 1891; the next was Florence Farr, on 22 December.^{[10](#)}

Florence Farr (1860-1917) was an exact contemporary of Annie Horniman: they were born in the same year and joined the Order in the same year, 1890. The personalities of the two women, however, were entirely different. Annie Horniman rejected codes others sought to impose on her, but had a rigid code of her own; Florence Farr had only a weak regard for any code. She was a very beautiful woman, with an especially beautiful voice; a professional actress, who played Rebecca West in the first English production of Ibsen's 'Rosmersholm' in 1891. She had been named after Florence Nightingale, whom her father, Dr William Farr, a celebrated sanitation reformer, knew and idolised. When he died in 1883, after a long and distressing illness, he was able to leave her only a very small annuity; pursuing her acting career, she lived with her sister, Mrs Henrietta Paget, who joined the Golden Dawn in 1892. On the last day of 1884 Florence married Edward Emery, another actor, but she soon tired of her scapegrace husband, who, with the help of his sister, was packed off to the United States in 1888; Florence never saw him again, and divorced him in 1894. She had a love affair with George Bernard Shaw and, many years later, one with W.B. Yeats. Her general attitude to the sexual act seems to have been that it did not matter much whether you did it or not. Ellic Howe describes her as having a 'somewhat indolent personality',^{[11](#)} which seems generally right, but she could work very hard, both at her acting and at her magic, which she took extremely seriously; she became a figure of great importance in the Golden Dawn. She succeeded Westcott as Praemonstratrix of the Isis-Urania Temple in 1893, which meant that she and Annie Horniman were together in charge of the conduct of the Temple rituals.

The Order of the R.R. et A.C., once established, maintained as much secrecy towards those belonging only to the outer Order, including the merely 'nominal' 5° = 6° members, as the outer Order members did towards those not belonging to the Golden Dawn: those of the First Order were not to be told when or where the Second Order met, what it did or who were its Chiefs. These, after the death of Woodman, were in fact the same two Chiefs as before, but under different magical names. In composing the ceremony for admission to the grade 5° = 6° Adeptus

Minor, and so to the inner Order, Mathers had a free hand, unconstrained by any Cypher MS summary: it was undoubtedly his masterpiece. The ceremony must take place in a specially constructed Vault of the Adepts, a heptagonal room designed as a replica of the tomb in which Christian Rosenkreutz's incorrupt body had been discovered in 1604. This necessitated the acquisition of new premises, which none but members of the Second Order might enter; but, since none could be found containing a seven-sided room, the actual Vault had to be made removable, and hence capable of being transferred to new premises. The Vault was an amazing spectacle. The ceiling was white, save for a rose enclosed in a black triangle, the whole within a black heptagram. The floor was black with a complex symbolic design in white, yellow and red. Each of the seven walls bore eight rows of five squares, each differently coloured and containing a Hebrew letter or sign of the zodiac, a planet or an element. In the centre of the room was the Pastos (tomb), elaborately decorated, and above it was a circular altar bearing various magical implements.

In the first part of the ceremony, the initiate was bound to a cross. There he undertook a solemn Obligation to keep secret, even from those in the First Order, all that he learned in the Second Order and all the practical work he did, and to 'apply myself to the Great Work, which is to purify and exalt my Spiritual Nature so that with the Divine Aid I may at length attain to be more than human'.¹² In the second part, the Chief Adept (either Westcott or Mathers), dressed in full regalia, was discovered in the Pastos, his eyes closed: he was playing the part of Christian Rosenkreutz. In the third part, the Chief Adept was found having risen from the tomb; the symbolism of the Vault was then explained to the candidate. Anyone who had undergone this extraordinary ritual with the proper disposition must indeed have thought that something of great significance had happened.

The theoretical scheme provided for a grade $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$ Adeptus Major, but this does not appear to have been conferred on anyone but Moina Mathers. Rather, a preliminary 'Portal ceremony' was soon introduced to precede admission to the Second Order, conferring upon the successful candidate an intermediate grade not envisaged in the original scheme, with the title 'Lord of the Paths of the Portal'. At first it was followed a few days later by the rite of admission to the $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ grade; later, nine months were required to elapse between them.¹³ In 1893 the grade of Adeptus Minor

was subdivided into subgrades of Zelator Adeptus Minor and Theoricus Adeptus Minor. An even higher subgrade of Practicus Adeptus Minor was envisaged, involving an exhausting course of study (including ‘Tarot Divination translated into Magical action’), but no one seems ever to have attempted it. Mathers's purpose was that the Second Order should be a school, not merely of occult knowledge, but of practical magic. The intention was realised, but the result was not greatly to Westcott's taste; gradually Mathers came to be sole controller of the affairs of the Second Order.

In 1893 the Amen-Ra Temple was established in Edinburgh; in the following year, Mathers and his wife founded an Ahathoor Temple in Paris. Mathers asked Annie Horniman to travel to Paris to consecrate it. It was joined by Eugène Jacob (Ély Star), the astrologer, and his wife, the cartomancer. Dr Gérard Encausse (Papus) also joined: despite his contemptuous dismissal of Mathers’ booklet on the Tarot in his *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, he could not resist acquiring membership in yet another secret Order, but did not remain a member for long. Also in 1894, Florence Farr appeared in a three-month season of new plays financed by money given her by Annie Horniman for the purpose: first John Todhunter's ‘A Comedy of Sighs’, and then Shaw's ‘Arms and the Man’, with Yeats's ‘The Land of Heart's Desire’ as a curtain-raiser to both. None of the playwrights was told where the backing had come from until many years later.

The Tarot in the Golden Dawn

The Golden Dawn gradually elaborated a detailed and coherent system of magical theory and practice. The instructions given to the members, as they attained the various grades, were worked out step by step as they first became needed, but together formed a systematic body of doctrine unavailable elsewhere, including, as in all magic, elaborate systems of correspondences between planets and signs of the zodiac, Hebrew letters, Tarot symbols, metals, precious stones, colours, etc. The brand of magic which the Order taught was, in broad outline, that of Éliphas Lévi – the familiar blend of Hermetism, the Cabala and the newly created ‘Tarot mystique’; but, in making it thoroughly systematic, the two leaders incorporated much not to be found in Lévi's writings. Westcott contributed a great deal of the more elementary part studied by members of the first or outer Order as they progressed from grade to grade; the more advanced

lessons given to the adepts of the inner Order were primarily the work of Mathers. In the course of elaborating these instructions, the Golden Dawn achieved a definitive summa of magical theory; that was its lasting accomplishment.

Naturally, the Tarot occupied an important place in the teaching given by the Golden Dawn to its members, both as an instrument of divination and as a component of magical theory; and one of the central ingredients of its instruction on the Tarot was the secret attribution contained in the Cypher MS. The Golden Dawn had been provided from the outset with a secret doctrine.¹⁴ Knowledge of the secret attribution, revealed to Golden Dawn members when they attained the grade of 3° = 8° Practicus, with the injunction that it never be disclosed to any uninitiated individual, gave its possessors the sense that they alone had the key to the true interpretation of the Tarot. But the Golden Dawn's teaching on the Tarot included much more than the secret attribution. Trump I was called the Magician; following the Cypher MS, trumps II, V and XXI were called the High Priestess, the Hierophant and the Universe respectively. For trumps I, II and V, these terms soon became common currency among all who practised Tarot cartomancy. Originally, trumps VIII (Justice) and XI (Strength) were interchanged merely for the purpose of assigning Hebrew letters and other correspondences to them; when Mathers designed a pack for the Order's members to copy, the two cards were actually renumbered XI and VIII respectively. This numbering, unknown in traditional Tarot packs intended for play, is to be found in many esoteric and cartomantic packs, though not in all. Even when Hebrew letters are absent, it is a sure mark of adherence to the tradition, not of Papus, but of the Golden Dawn.

The Golden Dawn teaching also involved assigning divinatory meanings to the trump cards, some of them based on the astrological associations, which need not detain us. Although Mathers seems not to have inscribed Hebrew letters on the trumps, he followed the Cypher MS in using the Cabala to interpret them and in correlating the trumps with the pathways between the spheres. This has been one of the most persistent features of the occult interpretation of the Tarot.

A large part of the Golden Dawn's theory of the Tarot, concerning principally the court cards and numeral cards of the four suits, and not derived from the Cypher MS, was contained in a document known as Book T, to be studied by a candidate for admission to grade 5° = 6°, and so to the

inner Order: on attaining that grade, he was further instructed in a method of Tarot divination peculiar to the Golden Dawn. Originally, the members probably used imported Tarot packs; but by the time the first candidates were ready to be admitted to the inner Order, the Tarot pack, as it was conceived within the Golden Dawn, had become so different from any that could be obtained commercially that Mathers designed a version, executed by his wife Moina, for the exclusive use of members of the Order. Every aspirant to the grade of Adeptus Minor was originally required to make a copy of this, though this obligation subsequently lapsed.¹⁵ All members of the Order were encouraged to use the Tarot for both meditation and divination: they visualised the trump subjects as animate beings encountered during astral projection, the trance-induced experience of travelling through other planes of existence.¹⁶

In summary, the associations of the Tarot trumps accepted in the Golden Dawn were as follows.

11	1 (Kether) – 2 (Chokmah)	<i>Aleph</i>	air	0 Fool
12	1 (Kether) – 3 (Binah)	<i>Beth</i>	Mercury	I Magician
13	1 (Kether) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Gimel</i>	Moon	II High Priestess
14	2 (Chokmah) – 3 (Binah)	<i>Daleth</i>	Venus	III Empress
15	2 (Chokmah) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>He</i>	Aries	IV Emperor
16	2 (Chokmah) – 4 (Chesed)	<i>Vau</i>	Taurus	V Hierophant
17	3 (Binah) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Zain</i>	Gemini	VI Lovers
18	3 (Binah) – 5 (Geburah)	<i>Cheth</i>	Cancer	VII Chariot
19	4 (Chesed) – 5 (Geburah)	<i>Teth</i>	Leo	VIII Strength
20	4 (Chesed) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Yod</i>	Virgo	IX Hermit
21	4 (Chesed) – 7 (Netzach)	<i>Kaph</i>	Jupiter	X Wheel of Fortune
22	5 (Geburah) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Lamed</i>	Libra	XI Justice
23	5 (Geburah) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Mem</i>	Water	XII Hanged Man
24	6 (Tiphereth) – 7 (Netzach)	<i>Nun</i>	Scorpio	XIII Death
25	6 (Tiphereth) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Samech</i>	Sagittarius	XIV Temperance
26	6 (Tiphereth) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Ain</i>	Capricorn	XV Devil
27	7 (Netzach) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Pe</i>	Mars	XVI Blasted Tower
29	7 (Netzach) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Tzaddi</i>	Aquarius	XVII Star
29	7 (Netzach) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Qoph</i>	Pisces	XVIII Moon
30	8 (Hod) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Resh</i>	Sun	XIX Sun
31	8 (Hod) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Shin</i>	Fire	XX Judgement
32	9 (Yesod) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Tau</i>	Saturn	XXI Universe

Needless to say, the suits of Batons and Coins were renamed Wands and Pentacles, and Cups and Swords sometimes called Chalices and Daggers. Surprisingly, the court figures received new titles, unknown outside the Golden Dawn. In each suit, the mounted Knight (*Cavalier* on the French cards) was promoted to the rank of King. The Queen retained her rank, but the King was placed in a chariot and demoted to the rank of Prince. As in

Frederick Holland's account, the Knave (*Valet* in French) changed sex: she became a Princess. The Fratres and Sorores of the Golden Dawn had to work exceedingly hard in return for the thrill of membership. For the court cards, Mathers adapted Lévi's use of the Tetragrammaton, the four-letter name of God: *Yod-He-Vau-He*. In the Cabala, each of the letters designated a quality akin to a role in the patriarchal family of antiquity: Mathers transferred these to the 'family' of court figures, at the same time relating them to the four classical elements. As Lévi had done, however, he also imposed the elements on the four suits, as follows.

Yod: father, active, emitting: Kings [Knights], **fire**, Wands

He: mother, passive, receiving: Queens, **water**, Cups

Vau: masculine, balancing: Princes [Kings], **air**, Swords

He: feminine, rejuvenating: Princesses [Jacks], **earth**, Pentacles

This gave only one elementally pure card in each suit (King of Wands, Queen of Cups, Prince of Swords, Princess of Pentacles); the others were hybrid, the Queen of Wands being 'water of fire', the Princess of Cups 'earth of water' and so on.

The associations with the numeral cards formed the most elaborate part of Mathers' theory. First, he associated each rank with one of the *sephiroth*: the Aces with *sephira* 1, Kether, and so on to the 10s with *sephira* 10, Malkuth. But he also associated the numeral cards other than the Aces with the 36 decans of Egyptian astrology, each covering a third of the period of one of the signs of the zodiac, and each influenced by one of the planets. Paul Christian had previously combined the decans with the numeral cards of the Tarot, but had not assigned specific meanings to the cards, despite an extensive discussion in his *Histoire de la magie*. Mathers, borrowing heavily from this discussion, took the logical next step, producing the following scheme:

Sign	Planet	Decan	Card
Leo	Saturn	Strife	5 Wands
Leo	Jupiter	Victory	6 Wands
Leo	Mars	Valour	7 Wands
Virgo	Sun	Prudence	8 Pentacles
Virgo	Venus	Material Gain	9 Pentacles
Virgo	Mercury	Wealth	10 Pentacles
Libra	Moon	Peace Restored	2 Swords
Libra	Saturn	Sorrow	3 Swords
Libra	Jupiter	Rest from Strife	4 Swords
Scorpio	Mars	Loss in Pleasure	5 Cups
Scorpio	Sun	Pleasure	6 Cups
Scorpio	Venus	Illusory Success	7 Cups
Sagittarius	Mercury	Swiftmess	8 Wands
Sagittarius	Moon	Great Strength	9 Wands
Sagittarius	Saturn	Oppression	10 Wands
Capricorn	Jupiter	Harmonious Change	2 Pentacles
Capricorn	Mars	Material Works	3 Pentacles
Capricorn	Sun	Earthly Power	4 Pentacles
Aquarius	Venus	Defeat	5 Swords
Aquarius	Mercury	Earned Success	6 Swords
Aquarius	Moon	Unstable Effort	7 Swords
Pisces	Saturn	Abandoned Success	8 Cups
Pisces	Jupiter	Material Happiness	9 Cups
Pisces	Mars	Perpetual Success	10 Cups
Aries	Mars	Dominion	2 Wands
Aries	Sun	Established Strength	3 Wands
Aries	Venus	Perfected Work	4 Wands
Taurus	Mercury	Material Trouble	5 Pentacles
Taurus	Moon	Material Success	6 Pentacles
Taurus	Saturn	Success Unfulfilled	7 Pentacles
Gemini	Jupiter	Shortened Force	8 Swords
Gemini	Mars	Despair & Cruelty	9 Swords
Gemini	Sun	Ruin	10 Swords
Cancer	Venus	Love	2 Cups
Cancer	Mercury	Abundance	3 Cups
Cancer	Moon	Blended Pleasure	4 Cups

Here the signs of the zodiac, beginning with Leo, follow in sequence, each repeated twice to accommodate three decans. The planets are repeated in a cycle of seven, from the slowest (Saturn) to the swiftest (the Moon), save that Mars occurs twice in succession. This is explained thus by Mathers:

There being 36 Decanates and only seven Planets, it follows that one of the latter must rule over one more decanate than the others. This is the Planet Mars which is allotted the last decan of Pisces and the first of Aries, because the long cold of the winter requires a great energy to overcome it and initiate spring.

He overlooked the fact that this explanation would be unconvincing to dwellers in the southern hemisphere. The numeral ranks likewise repeat in a cycle of nine, beginning with the 5. The sequence of suits is not

straightforward, however; if the cards were arranged in suits, the order of the planets and the decans would appear bizarre. This results from attending to the association between suits and elements: to the suit of Wands are reserved all those decans occupying **fire** signs (Leo, Sagittarius and Aries), signs not adjacent but as widely separated as possible. Similarly, to the suit of Cups are reserved the **water** signs of Scorpio, Pisces and Cancer, to that of Swords the **air** signs of Libra, Aquarius and Gemini, and to that of Pentacles the **earth** signs of Virgo, Capricorn and Taurus. Mathers also associated with each of these 36 numeral cards two of the 72 Cabalistic angels or divine emanations, whose names derive from the Cabalistic *Shem ha-MePhoresch*.

Mathers thought he had been shown 'how *absolutely* correct the symbolism of the Book T is, and how exactly it represents the occult Forces of the Universe'. The truth is, with his theory as with other detailed interpretations of the Tarot in terms of a mixture of the Cabala with astrology, that it has been made to fit only by *force majeure*. The natural way to represent the decans, like the signs of the zodiac, is pictorially, like the personifications on the frescoes in the Palazzo di Schifanoia in Ferrara; no one wishing to depict them would reasonably think of doing so by means of collocations of four suit-symbols, repeated from two to ten times, even without adding Aces and court cards using the same suit-symbols but with a different significance. The primal mistake was to attempt an occult interpretation of the suit cards at all: in so far as they represent anything, it is not the occult Forces of the Universe, but the heraldic emblems of the court of Mamluk Egypt (1250-1517), the source of the oldest known examples of the suit-symbols.

CHAPTER 6

Clouds over the Golden Dawn

Storms threaten the Golden Dawn

After the creation of the Second Order in 1891-2, Mathers came to assume virtually sole authority over the Golden Dawn; Westcott allowed this to happen, perhaps through weakness, perhaps because he was frightened of Mathers. The adepts of the Second Order had still a formidable body of theory to absorb; but under Mathers' guidance, they also began to engage extensively in practical magic such as invocation of spirits or projection of the astral body. Individually or with a few others, they would concentrate upon a symbol, particularly one of the so-called Tattva symbols, and experience a voyage on the astral plane, encountering spiritual beings and undergoing mystic adventures.

The Order's new pursuits were unattractive to Westcott, and probably also to Ayton. The latter retired in 1894 from the care of his parish and moved with his wife to a village in the district of East Grinstead, Sussex. His wife died around July 1898: he then lived briefly near Dartford, Kent, and afterwards for a time in Shepherd's Bush, London.

From 1895, various dissensions began to arise among the members of the Second Order and between them and Mathers, who, like all weak men given power, became ever more arrogant and dictatorial. The dissensions centred around Dr Edward William Berridge, F.L. Gardner and Annie Horniman. Berridge was a homeopathic doctor who became a member of the G.D. in 1889 and was Sub-Imperator of Isis-Urania from 1892. He was a proponent of the sexual mysticism of the American Thomas Lake Harris. At the turn of the year 1895, both Annie Horniman and, independently, a group of Second Order members wrote to Mathers complaining of a pamphlet Berridge had written under the name 'Respiro' and of doctrines he advocated.¹ Mathers replied disobligingly to both, prompting Mrs Helen Rand to write to him in early January 1896 to say that Berridge had 'urged doctrines which we all thought impure and mischievous' and that

he was not fitted for high office; she added that he had once tried to kiss her, forcing her to turn him out of the house. Although Mathers plainly sympathised with Berridge and wished to defend him, and disliked being told by others whom to discipline, Berridge ceased from March 1896 to hold a high office, being replaced as Sub-Imperator by Percy Bullock.²

In February 1895 Annie Horniman's mother died.³ She received a new legacy; but, while still financially supporting Mathers and his wife, she began to be worried by his behaviour. She observed on visits to Paris that he had started drinking heavily, and she was irritated by his extravagance and demands for more money. Not only did she suspect that his teaching was tinged with impurity; she was annoyed by his devoting himself to other activities at the expense of the affairs of the Order. These other activities were referred to, both by Mathers and herself, as 'political'; they could be so termed only in fantasy. Mathers threw himself into the Celtic revival, and joined with other dreamers in support of the Jacobite cause of restoring the Stuarts to the English throne. He discussed with yet others the establishment of an independent Scottish monarchy; and he hobnobbed with various royal pretenders, including the 'Emperor' of Byzantium. To letters from Annie in 1895 and 1896 expressing her concerns on these points, Mathers and his wife wrote some cruel replies, brutally hinting that she was on the verge of insanity, something of which she had a neurotic fear that it was hereditary in her family.

At the beginning of 1896, Annie decided that her support of 'MacGregor' and Moina Mathers must be placed on a definite basis: she wrote proposing a subvention of £300 a year, to be paid in quarterly instalments. Moina replied on 16 January, accepting the arrangement, but pleading that they must have the first instalment immediately, since they could not wait until March. The disagreeable correspondence nevertheless continued. In June 1896 Annie wrote to the couple, saying that the July instalment of £75 would be her last remittance to them,⁴ and had polite replies. But in July Mathers wrote to two senior Adepts making thirteen accusations, of which eleven concerned the conduct of Annie Horniman: so in September she resigned her office of Sub-Premonstratrix of Isis-Urania, receiving a rude acknowledgement from Mathers. She was succeeded by Mrs Rand.

On 13 May 1896 Florence Farr had joined with Allan Bennett, F.L. Gardner and Charles Rosher in an unofficial ceremony to evoke the spirit

Taphthartharath: Allan Bennett composed the ritual, with Egyptian material inserted by Florence Farr; she, as ‘the Mighty Magus of Art’, assumed the chief part in it.⁵

In October 1896 Mathers, worried at the attenuation of his authority over the Second Order, attempted to reassert it by a bombastic Manifesto to which every holder of the senior grade of Theoricus Adeptus Minor was to be required to sign a written statement of ‘voluntary submission’. In this Manifesto Mathers claimed to have been chosen as the sole link with the Secret Chiefs of the Order, whom he took to be ‘human and living upon this earth, but possessing terrible superhuman powers’. All the knowledge communicated to members of the Second Order was derived from them, as were instructions about the running of the Order. Most of the Manifesto is taken up with an account of how the Secret Chiefs communicated with him. Sometimes they did so by a voice heard by the external ear, sometimes by books which mysteriously appeared and vanished when he had transcribed them, sometimes in the physical body by ‘astral appointment’. These reports seem calculated to equal the experiences credited to Mme Blavatsky when she was writing *Isis Unveiled*. Mathers emphasised the physical effects upon him of these encounters, which resulted in discharges of blood from mouth and nose: a less advanced initiate could not have supported the strain for five minutes without death ensuing, he claimed. He went on to declare that he would check and punish ‘any attempt to criticise and interfere with the *private life of Members of the Order* ... The private Life of a Person is a matter between himself or herself and his, or her God’.⁶

The senior adepts, Westcott and Annie Horniman amongst them, duly sent Mathers the required written statements of submission. To Annie Mathers wrote on 22 November indicating his continued ‘displeasure’, accusing her of ‘injuring me by *every* means in your power, from endeavouring to undermine my authority in the Order, down to reducing me to poverty’; to be so accused is the common fate of those who, having given much, decide to give no more. Mathers added that he was also much annoyed with Westcott, who had ‘deliberately endeavoured to reduce me to the level of a puppet’. This did not inhibit Moina Mathers from writing five days later to cajole Annie Horniman into sending more money.⁷ Annie acknowledged the letter, but sent no money; and Mathers wrote on 3 December expelling her from both First and Second Orders. He did not

trouble to inform Westcott of his action; when Westcott heard of it, he said, in a letter to F.L. Gardner, 'It is a terrible reward for all her work and efforts'. She wrote to Westcott, enclosing copies of all her correspondence with Mathers. He replied, expressing himself as 'horrified' and offering her his 'utmost sympathy', but saying that he had 'no comfort to give'. 'There is no doubt that he is more high up than I am,' Westcott admitted; 'I have no power to prevent any action of his.' No resistance to the tyrant was to be expected from this quarter.

Before the end of 1896, Annie Horniman informed William Peck and other members of the Order in detail of the financial support she had given to Mathers and his wife, which hitherto only her friend Mrs Rand had known. In February 1897 she received another blow. She had never been very close to her father, now aged 61; his contracting of a second marriage with a woman of 21 aroused her fierce indignation, and she never spoke to him again.⁸

By expelling Annie Horniman, Mathers could scarcely have done more to produce an effect opposite to that after which he was striving, the reinforcement of his own authority; for his action was much resented by most of the London members save Allan Bennett and Dr Berridge. F.L. Gardner got up a petition, which he sent to Mathers, humbly requesting Annie Horniman's reinstatement; but though it was signed by a majority of the members, he does not appear to have sent their signatures.

Frederick Leigh Gardner was born on 31 March 1857 in Upper Holloway, London; his father, Frederick Gardner, an accountant, and his mother, née Elizabeth Leigh, were both practising spiritualists. The family had moved to another district of London, Chiswick, by 1870. Frederick Leigh joined the Theosophical Society when Mme Blavatsky arrived in London in 1884; he knew her personally, and was present at her cremation in 1891. In 1885 he married Miriam Emma Joseph, of Islington, his father having died in the meantime. He worked as a stockbroker's clerk until 1886, when he set up his own stockbroking firm. He was initiated as a Mason in the Montefiore Lodge in October of the same year, perhaps introduced into it by his father-in-law. He resigned from the Lodge in June 1889. In March 1889 he began a correspondence with the Reverend Ayton, which continued for many years; he was also on very friendly terms with Westcott. He joined the Golden Dawn in March 1894, just before his 37th birthday, and the Bristol College of the S.R.I.A. in April of the same year.

During 1896 Mathers began work on a book, *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, based on a French manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris which purported to be a translation made in 1458 from Hebrew. Mathers took it at face value, and believed it to provide reliable magic for contacting one's Guardian Angel and other supernatural beings, although it cannot in fact have been written before the XVIII century and is unlikely to be of Jewish origin. He dealt at first with a publisher himself, but in December, having extracted from Gardner a loan of £50, he placed the responsibility for publishing the book in Gardner's hands, asking him to repay the publisher the £10 advance that he had already received; but Gardner declined to let Mathers have the £250 he wanted to join a venture to construct Turkish railways. On 4 February 1897 Gardner became a Theoricus Adeptus Minor. There then occurred an amazing event: in March Westcott resigned all his offices in the Golden Dawn, though not his membership of it. His reason, given in a letter to Gardner of 17 March,⁹ was that it had 'become known to the State officers' that he was an official of a society in which he had been 'posturing as one possessed of magical powers', and it would not do for a Coroner to have this made public; Westcott hinted that someone had leaked the information. R.A. Gilbert has suggested¹⁰ that Westcott's pretext was false, and that Mathers had exacted his resignation as the price of refraining from giving conclusive proof of his forgeries. In any event, Mathers was now undisputed Chief, and appointed Florence Farr as Chief Adept in Anglia in Westcott's place, with authority over all the Temples. Learning that Mathers was in financial difficulties, she set about raising contributions for him from the Second Order members.

Mathers continued to antagonise members of the Order with his peremptory actions. The Scottish lawyer J.W. Brodie-Innes, born in 1848 at Milton Brodie, near Forres in Morayshire, had moved to Edinburgh after studying law at Cambridge. He had helped to found the Scottish Lodge of the Theosophical Society in 1884 and had been initiated in Isis-Urania Temple in August 1890. He entered the Second Order in April 1893; in December of that year he became a founder member of the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh. William Peck, also a member of the Theosophical Society and a keen astrologer although the City Astronomer of Edinburgh, was the first to be initiated in that Temple. Brodie-Innes had declined to sign the petition for reinstatement of Annie Horniman on the ground that it

was wrong to challenge Mathers' authority. His loyalty was not long in being put to the test: in April 1897, Mathers abruptly deposed him from his post as Imperator of Amen-Ra in favour of himself, ordering Brodie-Innes to resign from the Temple and resume membership of Isis-Urania. By October Mathers had given the post of Imperator to Peck.¹¹

At the Second Order meeting on 1 April 1897 at which Florence Farr's authority over the London branch was accepted, a resolution was passed which may have seemed a small detail at the time but which was in a few years to have momentous consequences: it legalised secret groups within the Order. Such groups, whose membership was kept confidential, consisted of people who belonged only by invitation, and carried out magical operations together. Both Mathers and Westcott sanctioned this development. Westcott indeed formed such a group of his own, perhaps to make up for his enforced abandonment of formal office; Brodie-Innes formed one in Edinburgh, doubtless to compensate for *his* loss of authority. The most important of the groups, however, was that run by Florence Farr under the name of the 'Sphere'. In the British Museum, at the end of 1895, she had made contact with an Egyptian Adept, thus becoming the first member of the Golden Dawn other than Mathers to profess to be in communication with a Secret Master. For some years this Adept played a role in the operations of the Sphere group.

A new pamphlet about Thomas Lake Harris now appeared, under the same pen-name 'Respiro', containing a footnote plainly alluding to Annie Horniman and accusing her of attempts to injure the author 'occultly'; he had retaliated by 'the aid of arch-natural powers' and 'the enemy was occultly crushed, this being followed in a few weeks by a great disaster on the material plane'. A copy was sent to a G.D. member containing on the same page a handwritten doggerel quatrain referring to Annie Horniman by the initials of her G.D. motto and to her 'feline claws'.¹² Gardner, convinced that this was the work of Dr Edward Berridge, was outraged.

Impatient to receive the manuscript of *The Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* and so publish the book and recoup his money, Gardner wrote to Mathers in May with an offer. For a trial period of six months, Mathers and his wife were to live in London at Gardner's expense, £1 a week being given them by the Adepts to live on; but until Mathers had completed the book, he should take lodgings near the Arsenal, with an additional £1 a week, and then come to join his wife in London. Mathers would have to

meet three conditions: to give up all political work; to reinstate Annie Horniman; and to expel Dr Berridge. Naturally, Mathers answered with an 'absolute and utter' refusal, and from now on viewed Gardner with implacable enmity; but he could not break with him completely, because he owed him money and was relying on him for publication of the book. Whether affronted by Berridge's behaviour, or thinking that a token gesture would be politic, he suspended him for three months from May 1897.¹³

When Berridge's period of suspension ended in August, Gardner wrote him an offensive letter, which Berridge forwarded to Mathers, who delivered a stinging rebuke to Gardner. Gardner now received a new blow. Florence Farr, as Praemonstratrix of Isis-Urania, had appointed him Hegemon, one of the chief officers in the rituals. Now she removed him from the office, saying that he was rude and boisterous. After expostulating to her, Gardner wrote to Mathers for redress; he upheld Florence Farr. Gardner then resigned from the Isis-Urania Temple, and at Mathers' instance, joined the Horus Temple at Bradford; this done, Mathers swiftly sent him a monumental rebuke. The *Abra-Melin* book was finally published in February 1898; Mathers and Gardner had been expecting to make a good deal of money from it, but, in the event, it sold only 120 copies in the first year.¹⁴

These contretemps were only preliminaries for the débâcle which was to ensue. In this a new actor was to play a prominent role in the drama: Aleister Crowley.

Aleister Crowley

Edward Alexander Crowley was born on 12 October 1875 at Leamington Spa. He was the only child of Emily (née Bishop) and Edward Crowley. Two generations of Crowleys had accumulated a fortune as brewers of Crowley's Ales. Emily and Edward nevertheless joined the fundamentalist sect of the Plymouth Brethren and abstained from drinking alcohol. Mrs Crowley, a conscientious but unintelligent disciplinarian, allegedly condemned her son's behaviour as beastly, and in Crowley's mind, he became the Great Beast, the anti-Christian monster of the Apocalypse. Crowley later adopted this name as a badge of pride and an affront to his mother, whom he consistently resented. Home life was strictly monitored, but not loveless or ascetic: the Great Beast, when little, was in some ways

badly spoiled. His father taught him that he belonged to a spiritual and cultural élite. This attitude, in the young Crowley, became snobbery, which surely retarded his social growth, already curtailed by his innate shyness and frequent illness. His alienation from Christianity began at the age of eleven when his father died. The boy was sent to his uncle, Tom Bond Bishop, an evangelical philanthropist but an unsympathetic mentor. Crowley attended a series of schools, always distasteful to him and, by his testimony, remarkable for vicious students and masters. In this early period, he experienced sex with a housemaid and a female prostitute and contracted venereal disease.¹⁵

At the age of 20 Crowley went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he tried earnestly to rectify his academic deficiencies. His Christmas holiday in 1896 included a trip to Sweden. In Stockholm, on 31 December, he experienced some profound realisation, either of his mystical nature or of his homosexual desires;¹⁶ both occultism and homosexuality began to preoccupy him at about this time. At Cambridge he found an older companion in Herbert Charles Jerome Pollitt, who was a friend of Aubrey Beardsley and a female impersonator on stage. Crowley always insisted that his relationship with Pollitt was platonic, but most biographers assume otherwise.¹⁷ While yet an undergraduate, Crowley published books of verse, one of which, *White Stains*, expressed overt homosexual sentiments.

Another of Crowley's friends was Gerald Kelly, future President of the Royal Academy, then a Cambridge undergraduate with a talent for painting. The two shared interests in art, mysticism, occultism, drama and poetry; among their literary heroes were Swinburne and Shelley.¹⁸

Crowley yearned to commune with the Devil, but his only instructions, which doubtless proved inadequate, came from A.E. Waite's *Book of Black Magic and Pacts* (1889). During an illness in October 1897, he had a vision that convinced him of the futility of worldly ambitions. He decided that high magic was the only worthwhile enterprise; but he needed practical instruction. He recalled Waite's published allusions to an unidentified tradition of occult knowledge. Crowley wrote to the author, who recommended him to read *Die Wolke über dem Heiligthume* (*The Cloud over the Sanctuary*) by Karl von Eckartshausen (1752-1803), which told of an assembly of adepts with powers to survey the world and direct its progress, and assured all serious aspirants to occult knowledge that the

Elect would instruct them. Here was a school to Crowley's liking and one in which he might at last succeed. He resolved to find these adepts or attract them to him: the quest became a fundamental theme in his life. Henry Pollitt tried to discourage Crowley's 'spiritual aspirations', and the young men separated in 1898.

Crowley left Cambridge in 1898 without a degree, heir to a fortune which he proceeded to squander. While mountain-climbing in Switzerland, he met Julian L. Baker, an analytical chemist (but known in occult circles as an alchemist). Baker introduced Crowley to another chemist-alchemist, George Cecil Jones. Both alchemists were members of the London temple of the Golden Dawn, and it was Jones who proposed Crowley for membership. Jones was a Welshman, slightly older than Crowley, in whom Crowley saw a physical resemblance to Christ as conventionally portrayed in Victorian art. Jones acquainted him with angelology and the evocation of his Guardian Angel. On 18 November, Crowley was initiated into the Golden Dawn as Frater Perdurabo ('I shall endure'): Jones participated in the ritual as Kerux (sentinel). Crowley resolved to contact the Order's highest authorities, the mysterious Secret Chiefs who seemed identical to von Eckartshausen's Elect. He advanced rapidly in the Outer Order, attaining its highest grade, 4° = 7° Philosophus, in May 1899. At one of the meetings, he encountered Allan Bennett, yet another chemical engineer. Crowley, who was still rich, invited Bennett, who was always destitute, to live at his flat on condition that Bennett would tutor him in magic.

Shortly thereafter, Crowley met S.L. Mathers. He and Moina had been occupied, in the first half of 1898, in developing Celtic Mysteries; but by the later part of the year these had been largely superseded by Rites of Isis, performed on stage many times in March 1899 with Mathers as Hierophant and Moina as High Priestess.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Mathers encouraged Crowley's obsession with all things Celtic. Crowley tried to trace his surname to the Breton family of de Querouaille. When this proved ludicrous, he aspired to Scottish and Irish roots.²⁰ His actual lack of Celtic heritage may help to explain his intense dislike of his fellow member of the Golden Dawn, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), who had joined in 1890. Yeats, the most distinguished of all the members of the Order, really was Irish, and could write real poetry. He was also close to

Mathers at that time – until Crowley interposed himself.^{[21](#)} Yeats, for his part, was to describe Crowley as an ‘unspeakable mad person’.^{[22](#)}

The storm breaks

In October 1899 Mathers offered Annie Horniman a partial reconciliation, proposing to restore her membership of the Ahathoor Temple in Paris (but not of Isis-Urania) if she would sign a document recognising him as Supreme Chief of the Order: she declined. In December of that year Mathers finally suspended F.L. Gardner from both First and Second Orders.

G.C. Jones had lent a copy of Mathers’ *Abra-Melin* book to Aleister Crowley, who resolved to test the ‘Abra-Melin Operation’ and sought an appropriate setting. This needed to be adaptable, spacious, secluded and available for a prolonged period. He finally rented Boleskine House on the southern shore of Loch Ness. On the basis of this tenancy, he styled himself Laird of Boleskine and invested in the appropriate tartan. (His new title did not supersede an earlier one as a Russian count, Vladimir Svareff.)

Just as the complementary characters of Westcott and of Mathers had combined to make the Golden Dawn so signal a success, so they interacted to bring about its downfall. Mathers had become a megalomaniac bully, Westcott a coward too frightened to stand up to him or to lend any support to those who did. It was their past that undid them. Westcott feared further disclosures to his professional colleagues or superiors, and was terrified that the fraudulent basis on which the Golden Dawn had been founded should be revealed. Mathers quite mistakenly suspected Westcott of plotting to usurp his authority, and held in reserve, as the ultimate weapon to counter any threat from him, his ability to make such revelations; intoxicated by his own splendour as the spokesman for the Secret Chiefs, he failed to grasp that, in the end, his own authority rested on the same basis.

Aleister Crowley had little opportunity to pursue sacred magic, being distracted by conflicts with the other London members of the Golden Dawn. When at the end of 1899 he applied to take the Portal ceremony, the first step from the First to the Second Order, Florence Farr, with the support of most of her colleagues in the inner Order, refused him.^{[23](#)}

Rumours had circulated about his sexual morals: some suspected him of engaging in ritualised sex ‘in order to gain magical power – both sexes are here connoted’.²⁴ Meanwhile, at a Second Order meeting on 12 January 1900, members expressed a lack of confidence in Mathers. From Mathers’ letter of 16 February to Florence Farr, it appears that they discussed closing Isis-Urania, and that she wrote to Mathers offering her resignation as his representative, i.e. as Chief Adept in Anglia.²⁵ Being determined to acquire whatever occult wisdom was preserved by the inner circle of the Order, Crowley went directly to Mathers in Paris on 15 January.²⁶ The next day Mathers, without consulting Florence Farr or any other of the London Adepts, or enquiring their reasons for refusing to admit him to the Second Order, conferred on Crowley a personal initiation as a 5° = 6°. This promotion offered the adoption of another magical name: Mathers, with total incongruity, dubbed Crowley ‘The Heart of Jesus’.

Crowley returned to Scotland in early February, and began introducing himself in public as Aleister MacGregor. From Boleskine, he used stationery that combined Rob Roy's motto (‘E'en do and spare not’) with Mathers’ motto (‘S Rioghail Mo Dhream, i.e. ‘Royal is My Clan’). He wrote to the Secretary of the Second Order, Mrs E.A. Hunter, announcing his initiation into it, and asking for the MSS to which he was entitled. The reply, refusing him, which he received on 25 March, was the first intimation to him that his initiation was not to be recognised by the London members. It was their first act of outright defiance of the Supreme Chief.

Mathers took more than a month to answer Florence Farr's letter of resignation and to comment on the minutes of the meeting of 12 January. When he did, on 16 February, he made a disastrous blunder. He began by refusing to close Isis-Urania and declining to accept Florence Farr's resignation as his representative. He went on to say that he could not let her force a schism under Dr Westcott; whether there had really been any question of this is obscure.²⁷ At any rate, Mathers attached sufficient credence to it to use his final weapon for discrediting his rival. Westcott, he said, had *not* received an epitome of Second Order work from Soror ‘Sapiens Dominabitur Astris’ (the motto of Fräulein Sprengel), and had *never* been in communication with the Secret Chiefs; rather, he had ‘*either himself forged or procured to be forged* the professed correspondence between him and them’. This was understood by Florence Farr as

referring, and was presumably intended to refer, to the original correspondence between Westcott and Fräulein Sprengel. Mathers explained that his tongue had been tied all those years by an Oath of Secrecy demanded of him by Westcott when he told him what he had done. '*Every atom* of the knowledge of the Order has come *through me alone*,' he added; 'it is I alone who have been and am in communication with the Secret Chiefs of the Order.'²⁸

This last observation hints, though it does not say outright, that the Cypher MS was spurious as well, an implication also carried in a letter from Mathers to Percy Bullock on 2 April; for in this he adduced his knowledge of the secret attribution to the Tarot trumps, unknown, he says, to Court de Gébelin, Etteilla, Christian and Lévi, as evidence of his contact with the Secret Chiefs. Florence Farr, not understanding, or not accepting, the implication, added a comment that the attribution had been revealed in the Cypher MS. If Lévi had seen the Cypher MS, as he was alleged to have done, he would have been mendacious, as Westcott maintained, not ignorant, as Mathers was claiming; Florence Farr must have seen this, although she did not spell it out.

Mathers closed his letter of 16 February by stating, confusingly, that 'Sapiens dominabitur astris' was then in Paris and aiding him with the Isis movement. This final remark cries out for explanation. After all, if the correspondence with Westcott was forged, there was no reason to think there had ever been a Soror Sapiens Dominabitur Astris, while, if it was authentic, she had died ten years before. What Mathers meant will be explained below.

Florence Farr pondered Mathers' letter, and, feeling impelled to communicate its contents to other members, convened a meeting to discuss it with five others, including W.B. Yeats and Percy Bullock; G.C. Jones was invited, but could not be present. If the accusation against Westcott were not a calumny, the entire basis, not only of his authority, and that of Mathers himself, but of the Order as a whole, was destroyed. Bullock wrote to Mathers on 4 and 18 March, without receiving a reply. A telegram was then sent to him, asking him to attend a Second Order meeting on 24 March. At this the members were told for the first time about Mathers' letter, and the Committee of Enquiry, comprising Florence Farr, W.B. Yeats, Percy Bullock, Mr and Mrs E.A. Hunter, M.W. Blackden and G.C. Jones, was made official. It is probable that at this meeting

members of the Order withdrew from Mathers their recognition of his authority.²⁹ Mathers wrote to Florence Farr on 23 March, removing her from her post as his representative and refusing to recognise the (unofficial) Committee; and on 2 April he at last wrote a letter (already quoted) to Percy Bullock, ineffectually ‘annulling’ the Committee of Enquiry; he also threatened to ask the Secret Chiefs to direct a deadly Punitive Current at the rebels. Meanwhile, in answer to every enquiry, Westcott prevaricated, making no confession but issuing no denial. Mathers carried out his threat. Taking a packet of dried peas, he named each one by the motto of one of the London Adepts. Next he invoked Beelzebub and Typhon; then, shaking the peas in a sieve, he called on the two devils to fall on his enemies and make them confound one another with quarrels.³⁰ The aftermath may be held to verify the effectiveness of this spell; but the vengeance wreaked by the demons, or more probably by divine justice, on Mathers himself was plainly the greater. He would have done better to heed the words he himself had written in 1889: ‘let him who ... determines to work evil, be assured that that evil will recoil on himself.’³¹

Impostors

At the end of his letter to Florence Farr, Mathers had asserted that ‘Sapiens Dominabitur Astris’, that is, Fräulein Sprengel, was with him in Paris. What had happened was that, in January or early February 1900, three Americans, a Dr Rose Adams and a Mr and Mrs Theo Horos, she a tall and very stout lady who was in fact 51 years old, but looked 60, her husband a very short man in his thirties, called on Mathers in Paris, professing to have come to help him with his Isis movement. She claimed to bear the motto ‘Sapiens Dominabitur Astris’, and to be of the grade 8° = 3° Magistra Templi, that is to say of a grade one higher than Mathers himself, and one supposed to connote membership of the Third Order; her husband was of the grade 4° = 7° and Dr Adams 2° = 9°.

In fact ‘Mrs Horos’, born Editha Salomon, had had a long career as a confidence artist, first posing as the daughter of Lola Montez and then, as Angel Anna, specialising as a spiritualistic medium. ‘Theo Horos’, actually Frank Dutton Jackson, was genuinely her (fourth) husband,³² while Dr Adams, actually Mary Evelyn Adams, was a dupe of the pair,

whom they had swindled out of her savings but in some way subjugated.³³ It says much of the all but insane state of mind in which Mathers then was that he was not only taken in, but supposed Mrs Horos to be Fräulein Sprengel (in whose existence he had in fact no reason to believe and who was supposed to be German rather than American); at a meeting of his Ahathoor Temple on 16 February he introduced her as Soror Sapiens Dominabitur Astris, saying that she was not dead as Westcott had reported. He also told the meeting that she belonged to the Thoth-Hermes Temple of the Golden Dawn in the United States.³⁴ The degree of Mathers' gullibility is shown by the fact that the three members of the Golden Dawn who encountered the Horos couple in London in December 1900, Westcott, F.L. Gardner and Percy Bullock, all detected them to be impostors. The couple 'borrowed' from Mathers some copies of Golden Dawn rituals and other books, but did not return them. They had left Paris by April, in fact for South Africa, where they ran a College of Occult Science. Learning that a warrant for their arrest had been issued there,³⁵ they reached London by December; there they called on some of the Adepts, hoping that their claims would be recognised, but without success.

By the time they left, Mathers had realised that they had deceived him. He retained a belief in their magical powers, however; in January 1901 he wrote to W.B. Yeats that they were 'emissaries of a *very powerful* secret Occult Order' that was trying to break up his work, and incidentally the Golden Dawn, and that 'on more than one occasion I conversed with the *real* "Sapiens dominabitur astris" in this woman'. Mrs Horos, he said, was 'probably the most powerful medium living'.³⁶

An unspeakable mad person

Meanwhile, the Committee of Enquiry prepared to examine the Cypher MS. Some Adepts, such as Thomas Henry Pattinson of Bradford, stoutly repudiated Mathers' charges, firmly believing in Westcott's probity; but the majority were inclined to accept that the letters from Fräulein Sprengel had been forged.

Learning on 25 March that his initiation by Mathers into the Second Order was not to be recognised by the London members, Crowley went to London on 3 April. Having seen his mistress Elaine Simpson and his friends Gerald Kelly and G.C. Jones to secure their loyalty to Mathers, he

arrived in Paris on 9 April and presented himself to the Chief. Between them, they concocted a plan for bringing the rebellious Second Order members to heel. A letter signed by Mathers was to summon them one by one to the Vault of the Adepts at 36 Blythe Road to be interrogated by Mathers's (unnamed) 'Envoy', who was in fact to be Crowley, wearing a mask. If they refused to acknowledge that the origin of the instruction they had received sprang from a pure source, they were to be degraded to Lords of the Portal; if they refused to accept Mathers' headship of the Order they were to be expelled from it altogether. Crowley returned to London on 13 April, and on 17 April, having convinced the landlord of his entitlement to do so, occupied the Vault, in company with Elaine Simpson. From there he sent out the letters summoning members of the Second Order for interrogation. On 19 April E.A. Hunter and W.B. Yeats called at the Vault; Crowley, who had not remained in the building, arrived in mid-morning and succeeded in entering, clad in Highland dress, with a plaid over his head and shoulders, a black mask covering his face and a great gilt cross on his breast. He was ejected with the help of a policeman.

The 'battle of Blythe Road' had ended ignominiously, but Crowley did not abandon his efforts. On 23 April, from an address in Maida Vale, London, he posted letters to all the Second Order members, requiring them each to reply to Elaine Simpson at the same address, making an appointment with himself. On Mathers' authority he also suspended Florence Farr, E.A. Hunter, Percy Bullock, W.B. Yeats and Miss Cracknell from both Inner and Outer Orders. At the same time he announced a lawsuit for the recovery of property he claimed had been taken from him at Blythe Road. The Second Order, now calling itself for public purposes the Research and Archaeological Association, lodged a counter-claim for property that Crowley had removed from the Vault. Crowley withdrew the summons and agreed to pay costs. Not merely the battle, but the campaign, had been lost.

Crowley, having spent a few days at Boleskine at the end of April, then visited Mathers again in Paris. Doubts were beginning to arise in his mind about Mathers' claim to represent the Masters; he eventually decided, as the result of some test he devised, that Mathers 'had never attained complete initiation' and had 'attracted to himself forces of evil too great and terrible for him to withstand'. From Paris Crowley returned for a brief visit to London, before departing for New York at the end of June 1900, to

travel round North America, Mexico, Ceylon, Burma and India, visiting Allan Bennett on the way.

The legacy of the Golden Dawn

In 1900 the Golden Dawn broke into several fragments. Thus the Order lasted, in its unfragmented form, for only twelve years; and yet almost all magical orders have ever since looked back on it as a fountainhead. This is not due at all to its claim to a remote ancestry, long since called in question, and only to a minor degree to the perfection of its rituals. It is due principally to the detailed system of magical theory and practice that was developed in the instructions given to the members as they rose from one grade to the next, forming a systematic body of doctrine that could be obtained from no other source. This work accomplished, no one wished to revise it, and few to carry it out afresh from scratch: whatever the failings of the Golden Dawn as an organisation, it had achieved a definitive summa of magical theory, to be drawn on by every successor group claiming to instruct aspirants to adepthood.^{[37](#)}

CHAPTER 7

Refractions of the Golden Dawn

Fragmentation

On the day of Crowley's ejection from the Vault of the Adepts, 19 April 1900, the Second Order committee met and suspended Mathers and three recalcitrant supporters of his from the R.R. et A.C., pending the decision of a General Meeting; the three supporters were Dr Edward Berridge, Miss Elaine Simpson and her mother Mrs Alice Simpson.¹ The committee also decreed that no one should be deemed to belong to the London branch who (like Crowley) had not been initiated by that branch. A General Meeting of the Second Order on 21 April was attended by 22 members, including Annie Horniman; she had been invited to resume membership of the Order by W.B. Yeats, though she was not formally reinstated until 26 April. A vote, with five members dissenting, declared that Mathers would no longer be recognised as Chief and that the connection with him was severed.² The five dissentients were Berridge, Mrs and Miss Simpson, Colonel James Webber Smith and, despite his membership of the Committee of Enquiry, Crowley's friend George Cecil Jones.³ The previous constitution of the R.R. et A.C. was abrogated, and the Order was to be run by an Executive Council, nominated by the twelve most senior Adepts and then elected by the whole body. On a motion of Florence Farr, seconded by A.E. Waite, it was to be appointed only for a year at a time;⁴ until it could be formed, the Order was to be run by the Committee of Enquiry, on which Charles Rosher was to replace G.C. Jones and Mrs Rand to replace Marcus Blackden.⁵ On 27 April Yeats was elected Imperator of the Outer Order's Isis-Urania Temple, with Mrs Rand as Cancellaria and as Sub-Imperator Robert Palmer Thomas, a railway official who joined the Order in November 1896 and entered the Second Order in April 1898. In a 'Statement of Recent Events' circulated to all Second Order members in May, those elected to the Executive Council were declared to be E.A. Hunter (Warden), Florence Farr (Moderator), Annie Horniman (Scribe),

Mrs Rand, Mrs Hunter, Mrs Fulham-Hughes, Marcus Blackden, Charles Rosher, Mrs Paget and W.B. Yeats, the last seven nominated as instructors;⁶ but in the by-laws adopted in May the chiefs of Isis-Urania (Imperator, Praemonstrator and Cancellarius) and its three chief ceremonial officers were also to be on the Council.⁷ In June printed forms were sent to all members of the Second Order, inviting signatures in acknowledgement of the authority of the Executive Council in place of that of Mathers. The Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh remained loyal to Mathers, as did the Horus Temple at Bradford, which, however, was closed down in 1902; the Osiris Temple at Weston-super-Mare had ceased to function in 1895, after the death in that year of Benjamin Cox.

Dr Berridge, appointed as his representative by Mathers, and now calling himself 'Practicus Adeptus Minor', proceeded to found a rival Isis Temple, of which Mathers was the Imperator.⁸ To this Westcott, terrified to break publicly with Mathers, adhered, though he had not himself been suspended; by September 1900 he had become Praemonstrator of the Temple.⁹ Aleister Crowley also had a desultory involvement with it: Mrs Maria Jane Burnley Scott, G.C. Jones and Gerald Kelly were among the other members. Despite Crowley's approval of him, his friend Allan Bennett tacitly withdrew from the Order. He needed to treat his asthma, and he wanted to study oriental religions. He combined the two projects by embarking for Ceylon.

Mrs Scott, surely at Berridge's behest, now resumed the attack on Annie Horniman, retailing to her, in a letter of 10 May, a threat by Berridge that, if she helped Florence Farr and others to fight Mathers, 'he would tell your father you were dabbling in magic and he felt sure your father would have you shut up in an Asylum'. The threat was carried out: an anonymous letter was sent to Frederick Horniman, now Liberal M.P. for Falmouth, saying that Annie belonged to a Secret Order whose object was 'practising so-called witchcraft of the Middle Ages'. She countered this resolutely, instructing a solicitor to write to Berridge demanding that libellous statements about her should stop: 'he would look very foolish when asked publicly to explain what "magic" means', she added.

F.L. Gardner, respecting his suspension by Mathers, had played no part in the upheavals. In October 1900 Mathers reinstated him, on condition that he did not join the opposition. Reluctant to oppose Mathers by asking for reinstatement by the rebels, but with little taste for cooperating with

Berridge, Gardner left the Order altogether. From 1901 to 1905 he served as Secretary General of the S.R.I.A. (from which Mathers was expelled in 1902). He retired from the Stock Exchange in March 1903; he then started a business as an antiquarian bookseller from his home in Chiswick, and published a catalogue raisonné of works on the occult. He died on 13 November 1929; his sister Mrs Alice Upton was living with him at the time, her husband and Gardner's wife probably having died previously, and she was with him at his deathbed.

Disputes

After the departure of Berridge and his colleagues, a new dissension arose in the main body concerning the groups that had been licensed in April 1897, after Annie Horniman's expulsion. Florence Farr, backed by most of the Executive Council, became the leader of one faction; Annie Horniman, strongly supported by Yeats, led the opposition to it. A personal antipathy had plainly developed between the two women, but the controversy turned on a question of principle. As Scribe, Annie Horniman was distressed to find that Florence Farr had kept the records carelessly, and had conducted the examination system with laxity. She caused some irritation by her efforts to restore order to the records, and by urging a resumption of the discipline to which she had been used before her expulsion. More importantly, she found out, to her dismay, about the secret groups of Second Order members that met for magical operations of their own.

In September 1900 Annie Horniman launched a determined campaign against the groups, above all the Sphere group run by Florence Farr. W.B. Yeats, who was in Ireland for six months until January 1901, at first thought, on his return, that one who had caused such irritation could not be in the right. Looking into the matter, however, he concluded that she *was* in the right, both about discipline and about the groups; he then became her ally throughout the ensuing disputes. In his view, the groups disrupted the unity of the Order. The dispute came to a head at a meeting of the Executive Council on 1 February 1901, with Florence Farr, as Moderator, in the chair. As soon as Annie Horniman, as Scribe, began to speak, it became apparent that a concerted attack was to be made upon her. She was very upset, rightly interpreting a proposal by Marcus Blackden and a bullying cross-examination of her by Palmer Thomas as implying that she was likely to falsify the coming election; since the majority were all

members of the Sphere or of some other secret group,¹⁰ they were pleased to humiliate the strongest opponent of the groups even before the topic was raised. Yeats attempted to support her, but was repeatedly ruled out of order by Florence Farr. When eventually the groups came to be discussed, a resolution of Florence Farr's in favour of legalising them was carried, with only Yeats and Annie Horniman voting against.

A General Meeting of the Second Order was to be held on 26 February. Annie Horniman composed her 'The Scribe's Account of the Executive Difficulty', while Yeats set about writing a series of open letters to the Adepts to set his views before them.¹¹ In the first of these, he complained of the insults directed at Annie Horniman, and said that he had asked Palmer Thomas to resign his post as Sub-Imperator until he had apologised to her. Yeats also declared that he would not stand for re-election to the Executive Council. In his next open letter he cited in detail irregularities committed by Florence Farr as Moderator; he ended by declaring that members of the Sphere had 'certainly formed themselves into a *magical* personality', thus intruding 'an alien being' into 'this great Order'; he added that, since Palmer Thomas had not apologised, he had suspended him from his post as Sub-Imperator until he did so. In his final letter, dated 21-2 February, he forcefully argued that the resolution in favour of the groups to be put to the General Meeting would license members to carry on whatever magical operations they chose without the knowledge or objection of members excluded from the secret circle.

These letters finally prompted a reply, in the form of a 'Statement by the Majority of the Council', signed by Florence Farr and seven others, which made strong personal criticisms of both Annie Horniman and Yeats, denouncing Yeats's suspension of Palmer Thomas as a 'flagrant piece of audacity before which the little tyrannies of our late Parisian Chief pale' – tyrannies which had included the expulsion of Annie Horniman. It argued against the importance of examinations and of the possession of degrees: among the Adepts Minores: having the rank of Theoricus was of less value than expertise in some branch of occultism. It advocated 'a system of carefully organised groups' and threatened the resignation of the signatories if their right to form groups was taken away. The General Meeting on 26 February 1901, with Percy Bullock in the chair, was not as stormy as might have been expected. The resolution declaring the legitimacy of the groups, moved by Marcus Blackden but explained

eirenically by him, was passed. It was agreed unanimously that a new constitution must be drawn up, and a committee, chaired by Brodie-Innes, was formed to make proposals for this. By a large majority, Palmer Thomas was restored to his post and Yeats' action declared illegal and unjust.

On the very next day, Annie Horniman, Yeats and Brodie-Innes circulated a letter to the Adepts, announcing Yeats' resignation as Imperator of Isis-Urania; Annie Horniman had apparently already resigned as Scribe.¹² They also insisted on the necessity for a constitution, remarking that there were 'at present no rules that are binding on the Order except the Obligation'.¹³ Yeats now printed a pamphlet, *Is the Order of R.R. et A.C. to remain a Magical Order?*,¹⁴ setting out with great force his vision of the Order, and circulated it in April 1901. He argued that a magical order differs from a society for experiment and research, in that 'it is an Actual Being, an organic life holding within itself the highest life of its members'. It could be maintained only by preserving the traditional discipline of examinations and degrees, and in particular by respecting the degree of Theoricus Adeptus Minor (to which Yeats himself had not yet attained), as being 'our link with the invisible Degrees'. The vision expressed in the 'Statement by the Majority' of 'a system of carefully organised groups' would degrade the Order to a mere society for experiment and research, whose members engaged in their own personal search for power and knowledge: a 'rabbit-warren of secret groups'.

Brodie-Innes, as chairman of the constitutional committee, addressed a letter to the Adepts, saying that the existing Council, not being truly elective, was only provisional, and setting out various possible forms of government: by three Chiefs, by one Chief, by an elective Council, or by such a Council headed by three Chiefs. It ended by affirming that the Order was guided by higher powers and would flourish if all accepted the will of the majority, but would perish if they failed to do so.

Calamity

Despite Yeats' eloquence, the campaign waged by him and Annie Horniman against the secret groups appeared to be lost. It was now rescued by a very untoward event. On 20 September 1901, Mr and Mrs Horos (or Jackson) were arrested: both of them on the charge of procuring

three young women for immoral purposes, and he for the rape of another, she for aiding and abetting him in the rape. Since their arrival in England, the couple had lectured in various towns; Jackson had also placed advertisements in newspapers for ladies of means with a view to matrimony. To those who naïvely answered, Mrs Horos was introduced as Mr Horos' mother. He then purported to initiate them into the 'Order of Theocratic Unity', using the Golden Dawn ritual stolen from Mathers, and proceeded to seduce them; sometimes Mrs Horos joined the couple in bed. The victim's money and valuables would be purloined; but when one lady laid a complaint on this score, the couple fled from their College of Life and Occult Sciences in Gower Street and took refuge in Birkenhead, where they were arrested. The victim who resisted, so that she had had actually to be raped, was called Daisy Adams.

Mrs Horos conducted her own defence. The jury found the couple guilty after ten minutes' deliberation; he was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude and she to seven. Although the prosecution made clear that the Order of the Golden Dawn was not itself involved, the trial brought upon the Order much public ridicule and some disgust. The initiation ritual was read out in open court; but the magistrate at the committal hearing did not read out the letter he had received from Mathers, probably because of well-founded doubts about its truthfulness.¹⁵

The public derision was too much for many of the members of the Golden Dawn to bear. Florence Farr, with a great many others, resigned in January 1902. Of the eight who had signed the Statement of the Majority, Henrietta Paget, Robert Palmer Thomas and Mr and Mrs Hunter had also left by June of that year; only three remained. The organiser and many of the members of the Sphere group had gone: the group collapsed, and with it, the whole pro-group movement. Annie Horniman and Yeats had nothing more to fear from it. William Peck, Emperor of the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh, was so terrified by the Horos scandal that he burned his robes, MSS and magical impedimenta; the Temple thenceforth ceased to exist.

In June Florence Farr joined the Theosophical Society, and learned more about Secret Adepts. She also organised a rite with Egyptian ceremonial and in March 1903 initiated Waite into it.¹⁶ She ended her days in Ceylon, as Principal of a College for Girls in Jaffna; she died in 1917 among her Tamil charges.

Interlude

Annie Horniman, however, remained a member of the Order for the time being, and even made contact with a 'Purple Adept' of her own. More important were the mysterious 'Sun Masters' of Dr R.W. Felkin, inhabitants of the astral plane with whom by 1902 he supposed himself to be in touch. Felkin had been a medical missionary in Uganda; after qualifying in Edinburgh, he had become an expert in tropical medicine. Initiated in Amen-Ra in 1894, he came to London and entered the Second Order in December 1896. In March 1902 Julian Baker, who had replaced Annie Horniman as Scribe, circulated a plan on behalf of what was now called the Provisional Council for reconstituting the whole Order. The Corpus Christi ceremony was no longer to be held, Second Order examinations were to be abolished, and communication established with other occult societies, on whose members the Adeptus Minor grade could be conferred without prior instruction or initiation: the Order would become little more than a club for people with interests in the occult.¹⁷ Brodie-Innes was strongly opposed to this plan, which was rejected at a Second Order meeting on 3 May 1902; but no alternative general constitution was adopted. Brodie-Innes, Felkin and Percy Bullock were placed in charge of the Order for a year, and required to present a new constitution at the General Meeting of 1903.¹⁸ In June 1902 new by-laws for the Outer Order were issued, presumably in line with what had been agreed at the meeting of 3 May.¹⁹ So far as they went, they accorded with the views of Annie Horniman and Yeats: three Chiefs were to be appointed by the Second Order, and the examination system strictly adhered to; members must maintain inviolable secrecy, and not allow themselves to be hypnotised. The three new Chiefs wrote to Annie Horniman on 21 May, expressing the belief that her objective coincided with their 'commission to restore the original constitution', and begging her not to engage in any controversy with individual members, but to address any complaints over irregularities to them.²⁰ The Three Chiefs issued manifestos on 20 and 26 June, insisting on secrecy and 'unity of will', and changing the Order's name to Hermetic Society of the Morgenröthe; the name 'Golden Dawn' had become too notorious.²¹ On 3 July Mathers issued from Paris another futile denunciation of the 'Rebels against my authority', voicing his conviction that it was they who had sent Mrs Horos to Paris and supplied

her with the information by means of which she had tricked him; he also declared that he had a 'stamped treaty' with Westcott. Westcott, meanwhile, was in communication with Theodor Reuss, to whom he gave warrants to found a Swedenborgian Rite lodge and a German branch of the Soc. Ros. He ended a letter to Reuss of 12 October 1902 with the words 'Private. Mind you do not let any branch of either Society admit a Mr. MacGregor Mathers alias the Count of Glenstrae of Paris'.²²

Annie Horniman, still smarting from the insults she had received, now demanded a public hearing to vindicate her honesty, which, she considered, had been impugned. In response the three Chiefs issued a Judgement in her favour, read at a Second Order meeting in July. Although the Sphere group no longer existed, Annie Horniman then issued yet another detailed denunciation of that group, asking to be allowed to hold a banishing ceremony to expel its influence. In this the Chiefs again acquiesced, appointing 11 December as the day for it to be performed. But in February 1903, she resigned from the Order. She never relinquished her belief in astrology or her practice of reading the Tarot cards in accordance with the Golden Dawn system.²³

After leaving the Golden Dawn, Annie Horniman devoted her life to her great work for the theatre: her foundation of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, occupying her from 1904 until the beginning of 1910, and her direction of the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester, inaugurating English repertory, which began in 1908 and continued until 1917, when the company disbanded. Her father had died in 1906, leaving her a final legacy; she spent her money for both theatres as generously as always (she is estimated to have spent £10,000 on the Abbey Theatre alone). Her Irish beneficiaries, including Yeats, were curmudgeonly in their failure to acknowledge how much she had done. In England she received gratitude and public recognition: an honorary degree from Manchester University in 1910 and royal nomination as Companion of Honour in 1932. She died in 1937, a much respected old lady.

Yet more fragmentation

By June 1902 peace might have been thought to have been restored to the Order. It was soon to be disrupted again, however, this time by A.E. Waite, who had hitherto played only a quite minor role. Arthur Edward Waite was born in Brooklyn on 2 October 1857, the illegitimate son of an English

mother, Emma Lovell, and an American father, Charles Frederick Waite, a sea captain. Captain Waite died at sea on 29 September 1858. Emma Lovell returned to England with her two children, but found her family hostile to her. Arthur Edward lived the rest of his life in England, and died in 1942. In 1863 his mother was received into the Catholic Church, and he was brought up in that faith; he was a very devout Catholic in his youth, but by the time he attained his majority, he had lapsed. He made a career for himself as a translator, reviewer and writer, of poetry, of books on occult subjects, Freemasonry and the Rosicrucians among them, of articles on these and other subjects, and of advertising copy for Horlick's Malted Milk. In 1886, he was the first to publish translations from Éliphas Lévi; in 1892, a translation appeared by A.P. Morton, a professional translator, of Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, with the title mistranslated as *The Tarot of the Bohemians* (it should be *The Tarot of the Gypsies*). A second edition of this translation, lightly revised by Waite, with an extensive Preface by him, but with the title unaltered, was to come out in 1910. In 1896 Waite brought out a translation of Lévi's *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, with a Biographical Preface contributed by himself, under the title *Transcendental Magic: its Doctrine and Ritual*.²⁴ He married in 1888, and joined the Golden Dawn in January 1891; he reached the highest grade in the Outer Order, 4° = 7° Philosophus, in April 1892, and shortly afterwards resigned. On 17 February 1896 he was readmitted to the Outer Order, but became a member of the Second Order as a 5° = 6° only on 3 March 1899.

With his friends Palmer Thomas and Marcus Blackden, Waite hatched in December 1902 a megalomaniac conspiracy. They formed a 'Secret Council of Rites', which, for the present at least, was to consist only of those three; its constitution was not drafted until May 1903.²⁵ Its aim was to 'obtain and exercise jurisdiction over' a number of occult orders and of fringe Masonic Rites, of which a list was drawn up: among the occult groups were the Martinist Order and the First and Second Orders of the Golden Dawn. Ostensibly the Rites thus captured were to be worked independently; in fact, the Secret Council would guide members through them according to an ascending scale determined by itself. In March 1903 Waite discussed the future of the Golden Dawn with Percy Bullock, and learned of disagreements within its ranks; in April he visited the aged Reverend Ayton, and received a promise of cooperation from him.²⁶

At the Annual General Meeting of the R.R. et A.C. in May 1903 Waite put his treacherous plan into operation, with partial success. The Three Chiefs presented their proposed constitution. This contained a concession to the reformers, in the form of a clause abolishing the distinction of sub-grades within the Second Order; otherwise it was much along the lines favoured by those who wished to preserve the traditional discipline. Waite, who had succeeded in making himself the leader of a substantial minority of the Order, began by objecting to each clause in turn, and then proposed to reject it in its entirety; although a majority voted in favour of this, it failed to gain the required two-thirds approval to be adopted. Waite then proposed that the two factions should form separate bodies; the meeting ended in confusion.

According to Waite's autobiography, it was resolved at the meeting that the triumvirate should not remain in office for a further year,²⁷ but since they had not been replaced, they continued. However, Percy Bullock resigned in June, leaving only two Chiefs. According to Waite's diary, his ally Blackden was elected to fill Bullock's place until an emergency meeting could be called.²⁸ Apparently the emergency meeting was never called, since Brodie-Innes agreed with Waite in a letter of 5 August that a third Chief had not yet been duly elected.²⁹ Rather than relying on Blackden's temporary authority, Waite found it more convenient to adopt the legalistic position that two Chiefs by themselves lacked any authority and hence that 'the whole Order had entered into abeyance as far as government was concerned'.³⁰

Brodie-Innes, whom Waite detested, returned to Edinburgh after the May meeting, and he and Waite carried on a fruitless correspondence from July to December. During the following two months Waite set out the wishes of the minority led by him. He questioned the derivation of Order doctrines from the Third Order, objected to examinations within the Second Order, and declared that the Chiefs must be Masons; he and Blackden had become Masons only in September 1901. Allowing that his following formed only a minority, he stated that they regarded a division of the Order between the two parties as a necessity; each group should recognise the independence and legitimacy of the other, and a concordat should be signed between them. The properties of the order should be shared out between them; Waite suggested that his group should take those of the Outer Order, and Brodie-Innes's those of the Inner.³¹ It was probably on 4

July that Waite's faction possessed itself of some of these properties.³² On 24 July a manifesto was issued, with twelve signatures, including those of Ayton, Blackden, Waite himself, Mrs Rand, Mrs Bullock and Julian Baker.³³ This repeated the points that Waite had already made, argued that grades within the Second Order should either be abolished or attained otherwise than by passing examinations, and ended by declaring that 'the mystic way' was the Order's original path, and that the practice of 'the lower occultism' had originated with the ascendancy of a single Chief. Brodie-Innes enquired on 8 September what Waite meant by these phrases.³⁴ It is plain that by 'the lower occultism' Waite meant practical magic. Waite cannot be described as a magician; but he *was* an occultist. His aim was, by the use of occult symbolism and ceremonial, to create a substitute for religion; perhaps for that religion which he had practised so enthusiastically in his boyhood.

The Secret Council had made its first take-over bid and scored a partial victory, which Waite proceeded to consolidate. The Council made no further attempt to carry out its programme: evidently Waite had become more interested in conducting the Order he had captured. (He was to make an abortive attempt to revive the Secret Council in 1922.) The inaugural meeting of Waite's Independent and Rectified Rite took place on 7 November 1903; at that stage, only fourteen Second Order members adhered to it. The Independent Rite claimed possession of the Isis-Urania Temple; its three Chiefs were Waite, Blackden and Ayton. A constitution was drawn up; Mrs Rand was appointed Recorder and Mrs Bullock Bursar. By the time that the Second Convocation was held, on 16 April 1904, eight more Second Order members had joined, including Percy Bullock, and seven from the Outer Order. The existing grades were retained, but 5° = 6° was made the sole Second Order grade; Waite immediately set about revising the rituals, though not too drastically. Ayton was too old to take an active part in running the Order, so Waite was able to do much as he liked with it.

The many members who had no sympathy with Waite's aims and no wish to accept his authority, including Felkin, Brodie-Innes and Yeats, were now compelled to rename the Order which they still saw as the true continuation of the Golden Dawn. They chose the name *Stella Matutina* (Morning Star); its Outer Order Temple, of which Felkin was Imperator, became the *Amoun Temple*. As in all the fragments into which the Order

broke, including Waite's, the Inner Order retained the name R.R. et A.C. There were now three successor Orders to the Golden Dawn. It was probably at about this time that the faction loyal to Mathers, under the authority of Dr Berridge, came to assume the name Alpha et Omega, abbreviated to A.O.

The Argenteum Astrum

In the spring of 1904 Aleister Crowley was settled at Boleskine. He had met and married a young widow, Rose Kelly Skerrett, the sister of Gerald Kelly. In July, Rose bore Crowley's daughter, named Nuit Ma Athanoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith. But the roles of husband, father and Scottish laird did not make for a contented Crowley. In May 1905, he began another circumnavigation of the globe. It was a macabre journey. On the slopes of Kangchenjunga, he deserted fellow mountaineers whom he knew to be dying; in Calcutta, he shot and reportedly killed two assailants; in Indo-China, he vengefully ejected a trail guide from his saddle on to rocks and thorns. Rose and the baby were dragged along for most of this trip, but in April 1906 Crowley sent them home. Off he went, hopeful of a liaison with Elaine Simpson in Shanghai; she, now married, rejected his sexual advances but cooperated in magical evocations. Crowley's wife was unable to locate him to tell him that their baby had contracted typhoid. When he finally docked in Liverpool in June 1906, he learned that his daughter had died. He blamed Rose.

In July, Crowley joined George Cecil Jones at his home in Basingstoke, and they renewed occult studies. Since his departure for America in 1900, Crowley had no longer deemed it necessary to be admitted to higher grades by Mathers or anyone else: he could admit himself, and had already by this means attained the grades of Adeptus Major and Adeptus Exemptus. For Crowley and his disciples, this new step utterly changed the process of advancement through the senior grades: from a progression from rank to rank of a hierarchical Order, sanctioned by one's superiors in it, it became a personal pilgrimage in magical adepthood, fitness for each step to be judged by oneself alone. Crowley and Jones now began to plan their own esoteric order. The organisation was to be called the 'Argenteum Astrum' (Silver Star).³⁵ The new order deserved sacred scriptures, so Crowley received them 'in high trance', thus producing about a dozen documents.³⁶

The A.A. was eventually founded by Crowley in 1907; it too, used the Golden Dawn rituals. In July 1908 Crowley wrote to Westcott, demanding that he make the Cypher MS public, on pain of Crowley's publishing 'a complete statement of the whole transaction from the day of Sapiens Dominabitur Astris until now'; he received no reply. Crowley thereupon wrote again to Westcott, saying, 'I am commanded to say to you, "The feet of the young men are at the door, and shall carry thee out."' ³⁷

In March 1909 Crowley began to publish, as the official organ of the A.A., a biannual journal, entitled *The Equinox* to indicate the dates of its appearance. Jones, Bennett and Fuller became regular contributors. John Frederick Charles Fuller was an army captain who had been sent home from India to recuperate from enteric fever. His studies of Hinduism and yoga had whetted his appetite for mystical experience. He joined the A.A. with the motto 'Per Ardua' ('Through Hardships'). An occasional painter, he supplied the graphic art for *The Equinox* as well as colourful renderings of occult diagrams and ornaments intended for a temple of the Silver Star.³⁸ Fuller is the nominal author of 'The Temple of Solomon', Crowley's biography endlessly serialised in *The Equinox*. He also wrote *The Star in the West: A Critical Essay upon the Works of Aleister Crowley* (1907) and compiled a *Biblioteca Crowleyana* (published posthumously in 1966).

Rose Crowley was no doubt aware that her husband's magic was turning ever more sinister and perverse. Hopes of a happy home life had faded. The birth of another daughter, Lola Zaza, did not transform Aleister into a faithful husband. Rose became dependent on alcohol and in 1909 she divorced Crowley on the grounds of adultery. Within two years, she would be confined to a sanatorium. Crowley's callousness toward Rose completely alienated her brother Gerald.

With the foundation of the A.A., there were *four* splinters from the fragmented Golden Dawn, the fourth of them founded by Mathers' ally in the original dispute. The Golden Dawn's interpretation of the Tarot had been a major component of its secret doctrine; it was now shared by four occult groups.

PART III

UNLOCKING THE DOCTRINES

CHAPTER 8

Waite's Tarot and the Secret Doctrines

Secrets betrayed

In 1909 Crowley published his *Liber 777*, in which the secret attribution of Hebrew letters to Tarot trumps was revealed.¹ He also began publishing the Golden Dawn rituals and the books of instruction in *The Equinox*, beginning with the Outer Order rituals in abbreviated form in the September issue, and announcing publication of the R.R. et A.C. rites in the next issue. In 1910 Mathers, enraged, swept into London from Paris to seek a court injunction against Crowley compelling him to desist. He obtained a temporary injunction, but lacked the funds to proceed to obtain a permanent one. He appealed to Westcott for financial help. Westcott, through Arthur Cadbury-Jones as intermediary, demanded the withdrawal of Mathers's charge of forgery, including a letter backdated to 1901 or 1902 as a condition for helping him.² Mathers refused these terms, and Crowley went ahead with publication. The altercation exposed both Crowley and Mathers to public scrutiny and merciless parody in the press.³ Crowley progressively published in *The Equinox* all the Golden Dawn magical instructions, which the members had taken oaths not to reveal even to those in lower grades; those on the Tarot appeared in 1912.

It was not only in the press serving the outer circles of the uninitiated that the quarrel prompted contemptuous comments. The issue of the *Occult Review* for May 1910 contained an editorial reporting 'the publication in a biennial [sic] magazine styled the *Equinox* of some considerable portions of the rituals and ceremonies of a secret society bearing the name of the "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn" '.⁴ Both the Golden Dawn and Mathers were ridiculed; the G.D. was plainly not then held in as high regard among occultists in general as it has now for some time been. The material quoted in *The Equinox* was not actually an official ritual of the Golden Dawn, but the evocation of the spirit Taphthartharath that had been performed by Florence Farr and others in May 1896.

Crowley had quoted it in full, complete with curses consigning the spirit to the nethermost hell if he failed to appear; the editor of the *Occult Review* particularly mocked these threats, observing that the unfortunate spirit might be engaged on some other business, and remarked, 'this is mystery-monger-ing *in excelsis*'. Its publication, he said, 'casts a richly deserved ridicule on the order in question'. 'I have never been able to appreciate the necessity for such things as secret occult societies at the present day, he continued: 'to hold back knowledge which may be of value to your fellow-men is ... sinning against the Light.' The days of secret orders were drawing to a close.

Crowley, while visiting his *alma mater* in 1908, met Victor Benjamin Neuburg, a student of languages. Neuburg was eager to become an accomplished sorcerer. In 1909 he graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, and Crowley invited the young man to Boleskine. Neuburg joined the A.A. with the motto 'Lampada Tradam' ('I will pass on the torch'). As Crowley had previously dragged Rose across Asia, he now dragged Neuburg across North Africa. Wishing to impress the locals as a magician, Crowley conscripted Neuburg to pose as a subservient demon whom Crowley could lead about on a leash. Neuburg obediently shaved his head, except for two tufts of red hair, twisted into horns.⁵ During a magical ritual in the Algerian desert, Crowley persuaded Neuburg to combine their erotic and occult pursuits; both men subsequently became preoccupied with sexual magic.

Crowley considered himself the reincarnation of Edward Kelley or Kelly, the seer who had served the famous magician John Dee (1527-1608) and had co-operated with him in evoking the so-called Enochian spirits. Crowley had tried independently to renew this effort; he was resuming work after a hiatus of three centuries. Now he had the help of Victor Neuburg: the latter could assume Dee's role as stenographer while Crowley became the medium. On the afternoon of 6 December 1909, on the sand dunes near Bou-saad, Crowley undertook the conjuration of an Enochian demon called Choronzon, 'The Demon of the Abyss'. The two mortals allegedly succeeded but were then psychologically shattered. By one report, Crowley 'never recovered', and Neuburg too 'bore the marks of his magical adventure to the grave'.⁶ These scars are not specified. In all probability, the worst damage during the whole African sojourn was the abuse to Neuburg's hairstyle. The two men stayed together and continued

their magical and sexual experiments. Crowley promoted himself to 80 = 30 Magister Templi (Master of the Temple) and took the motto 'Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici' ('I, while yet alive, by the force of truth have conquered the universe'). By so doing, he 'crossed the Abyss' thought to separate the three highest *sephiroth* from the seven lower ones.

Students in the A.A. had the benefit of Crowley's compendium, *Liber 777*, a complex synthesis of occult correspondences, in which the secret attribution was first revealed. All this was supposedly extracted entirely from Crowley's memory; but he was remembering notes that Allan Bennett had received from S.L. Mathers.⁷

In the autumn of 1910, Crowley gave public performances of his 'Rites of Eleusis'. These featured Victor Neuburg, who danced, and some newer recruits, including Leila Waddell, a violinist. She was partly of Maori descent, and with her dark complexion and costume, projected a dramatic appearance. She became Crowley's mistress. The drama troupe sometimes received a favourable review, but De Wend Fenton, in his scandal sheet *The Looking Glass*, repeatedly criticised Crowley's theatricals and, as an aside, accused Crowley of 'unmentionable immoralities' with Allan Bennett and, by implication, with George Cecil Jones. The latter, in April 1911, sued for libel. J.F.C. Fuller testified on Jones's behalf. One of Fenton's witnesses was Mathers, who wished to punish both Jones and Crowley as deceivers (with their sex magic), usurpers (with their publication of Golden Dawn papers) and now rivals (with their new order, the A.A.). The judge summed up in favour of Jones, but the jury rejected the suit. Jones was publicly disgraced, and Crowley received yet more unfavourable publicity. Jones hoped that, when Crowley filed his own suit for libel, he himself would be vindicated; but the Beast had no intention of filing. Fuller interceded for Jones, but Crowley was unmoved. The three parted company. Jones, Fuller and others quit the A.A. Victor Neuburg stayed with Crowley, and they returned to the North African desert. When Neuburg dropped from exhaustion, Crowley abandoned him. Despite this, they eventually reunited.

The result of the betrayal

Crowley's publication of the secret attribution and of the G.D. rituals was a turning point in the history of modern occultism, though at the time, it seemed merely a treacherous breach by Crowley of the oaths of secrecy he

had sworn. The era of secret orders was waning; secrecy had proved impossible to maintain. Of all the secret orders, the Golden Dawn, until the crisis came upon it, had been by far the most successful, save of course for the Freemasons. Its members had believed themselves the exclusive possessors of secret knowledge derived from three sources: the centuries-old tradition of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, of which they supposed themselves the heirs; the Cypher MS; and the teachings of the Secret Chiefs, communicated to their own visible Chiefs. With Mathers' revelation, the credentials of these sources had been called into question; now the secret rites and secret teaching were being put into print for anyone to read who cared to do so. The *raison d'être* of secret orders had gone. The game had been played and lost; it could not be played a second time.

The change that had occurred was as yet far from evident to all. One of those to have an inkling of it, and to respond accordingly, was A.E. Waite. An occultist of a timid kind, with an idiosyncratic, pompous literary style, he was disdainful of his fellow-occultists, conscious of being far more scholarly than they. His most influential act occurred in 1909, when he took the initiative to create the first complete published cartomantic Tarot pack other than Etteilla's and those deriving from it. As long as a knowledge of the Tarot and of its interpretation was regarded as part of the secret wisdom exclusive to the initiated, there was every incentive to keep it secret. A motive to publicise it could arise only when the secret had been divulged; it is because of this altered situation that we can now visit a specialist bookshop and choose between an immense variety of occultist Tarot packs. Waite was the first to perceive this, if only dimly, and the first to react to it. Admittedly, *Liber 777* seemed unlikely to reach anyone outside the narrowest circles of devotees of magic; but soon after Waite's pack was published at the very end of 1909, an article by 'V.N.' in the May 1910 issue of the *Occult Review* broadcast the secret attribution to a somewhat wider body of readers.⁸ 'V.N.' might be the initials of George Cecil Jones's motto 'Volo Noscere' ('I Want to Know'), but are more probably those of Victor Neuburg.⁹ The article purports to arrive by iconographic reasoning at the best assignment of zodiacal signs, planets and elements to the Tarot trumps, and thence, via the *Sepher Yetzirah*, to the correct attribution of Hebrew letters. This proves to be precisely the

secret attribution, and the article ends by reproducing the relevant page from *Book 777*.

Waite chose as the artist to execute his plan Pamela Colman Smith (1878-1951).¹⁰ Born in Pimlico, London, of American parents, Charles Edward Smith and Corinne Colman, she spent her early years in England, first in Chislehurst and then in Manchester. In the early 1890s the family moved to Kingston, Jamaica, where her father was employed by the West India Improvement Co. and where her mother died in 1896. From 1893 to 1897 Pamela studied art at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn; she had her first major show in New York in 1897, and paid a long visit to Jamaica in 1898. She then returned to New York, where she wrote and illustrated a number of hand-coloured books. She paid an extended visit to England with her father in the summer of 1899, returning to New York in October; on 1 December, her father died unexpectedly. Pamela had got to know the great actress Ellen Terry, and joined the Lyceum Theatre company, whose celebrated stars were Ellen Terry and Sir Henry Irving, on their return to England in May 1900. Pamela lived with Ellen Terry for her first ten months back in England, and went on tour with the company for nine weeks in the autumn of 1900; she then worked at set and costume design for it. In May 1901 she obtained a studio of her own, where she entertained many writers and artists such as Arthur Ransome, Bram Stoker, John Masefield, Lady Gregory, Florence Farr and above all W.B. Yeats, who deeply influenced her.

Pamela Colman Smith must have made good use of her time in Jamaica. She was fascinated by the folk tales she learned there, especially by those about Anansi, or Annancy, as she spelled the name, still a very popular character in West Africa; in 1899 she published a book of *Annancy Stories*. All her life she loved to tell these stories, winding a kerchief round her head and dressing in long robes for the performance. She also gave performances in her toy theatre. Her company was much enjoyed by all those who visited her.

Pamela Smith was not a great artist, but she had a genuine imagination and her work appealed to the taste of the time; she had a show in New York in each of the years from 1907 to 1909. That she never achieved any marked success seems to have been due to her incapacity as a businesswoman and the lack of anyone to help her in this respect. She collaborated with Jack Yeats on *A Broad Sheet* from 1901 to 1902, but

withdrew from it in 1903 to start her own monthly magazine, *The Green Sheaf*, which lasted exactly a year. A venture into publishing followed, but this, too, made little money and had to be abandoned. She also illustrated many books without being paid a decent remuneration. She seems to have been a rather sweet person; it does not appear that she ever harmed anybody or even harboured malevolent thoughts towards anyone. Under W.B. Yeats's influence, she joined the Isis-Urania Temple of the Golden Dawn in 1901.¹¹ In 1904, after the split had occurred, she decided, despite her friendship with Yeats, with whom she long continued to keep in touch, to adhere to Waite's branch of the fragmented Order; she had then reached no higher than the grade $1^{\circ} = 10^{\circ}$.

She never married. In 1911 she was received into the Catholic Church, to which she remained faithful for the rest of her life. She designed posters for the women's suffrage movement, and, during the War, for the Red Cross. In 1919 she left London and settled in The Lizard on the south coast of Cornwall, where, while continuing her relentlessly unprofitable work as artist, illustrator and writer, she ran a holiday home for priests; there was a chapel in the grounds of her house. A Mrs Nora Lake, presumably a widow, joined her while she was living there, and remained her friend and companion until her death. In about 1942, the pair moved to Bude, on the north coast of the county, where Pamela Colman Smith died in 1951. In her will, she left everything she had to Nora Lake; but all was consumed in payment of the many debts she had accumulated.

She evidently received from Waite or from the publisher, Rider & Co, a flat sum in recompense for the work she did in 1909 in designing the Tarot pack published at the end of that year¹² and unfairly known, almost universally, as the 'Rider-Waite Tarot'; in a letter of 19 November 1909, she said, 'I've just finished a big job for very little cash! a set of designs for a pack of *Tarot* cards'.¹³ If she had insisted upon royalties, this would surely have eased, and perhaps dispelled altogether, the financial difficulties from which she increasingly suffered: for the pack was, and has continued to be, a triumphant success. Not only was it the first complete commercially available cartomantic Tarot pack to be produced in Britain, and the first independent of the Etteilla tradition to be produced anywhere, but, in face of all the competition put up against it over the years, it has remained the most popular. In his revision of the English translation of Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, Waite went so far as to

insert a footnote saying that the Tarot de Marseille was no longer extant, but had been ‘superseded in all respects’ by the pack designed by Miss Smith at his instructions.¹⁴ Many of the later occultist packs have borrowed from Pamela Colman Smith's design; it could almost be said to have established a standard pattern for occultist Tarot packs. But the designer never benefited from its success; conventional nomenclature was not even to attach her name to it.

She worked to Waite's instructions; to what extent precisely we have no sure means of knowing. The trumps bear Roman numerals in the centre at the top (the Fool is numbered 0), and, together with the court cards and the Aces, they, including Death (XIII), bear their names in English in a panel at the bottom. Etteilla's practice of numbering all the cards of the pack continuously up to 77 or 78 was abandoned. In agreement with G.D. practice, the suits are called Swords, Wands, Cups and Pentacles. The court figures, on the other hand, are an enthroned King and Queen, a mounted Knight and a standing Page. From this more traditional court, in place of the mounted King, seated Queen, charioteer Prince and standing Princess of the G.D. conception, it can be seen that Waite was not aiming to follow at all closely the ideas of the Golden Dawn concerning the Tarot. On all four Aces, rather than, as in the Tarot de Marseille, just those of Swords and Wands or Batons, the suit-signs are held by human hands. It is the numeral cards from 2 to 10 that are the most unusual. These have Roman numerals at top centre to indicate their rank, but can be distinguished from the trumps by the fact that they have no inscribed panel at the bottom. They all show, not a more or less regular arrangement of the appropriate number of suit-signs, but a scene with one or more human figures, into which that number of suit-signs has been worked. This device has just one precedent, the designs of the Sola-Busca cards – a highly non-standard copper-engraved XV-century Tarot pack of Ferrarese origin. Waite must surely have suggested these cards to Pamela Smith as a likely model; she could study them in photographs which the British Museum had had since 1907. Kaplan credits Gertrude Moakley with the discovery that she did not merely adopt the general idea, but that her designs for certain of the cards are clearly based on the corresponding cards of the Sola-Busca pack. As the name ‘Pentacles’ suggests, the suit-signs in that suit consist of discs with five-pointed stars (pentagrams) inscribed on them.

The names of the trumps (see plate 9) are more or less as in Mathers' booklet. Trumps I, II and V are the Magician, the High Priestess and the Hierophant respectively. XVI is simply the Tower, XX simply Judgement and 0 simply the Fool; XXI is the World rather than the Universe. In accordance with Golden Dawn tradition, the positions of Strength and Justice are interchanged, Strength being numbered VIII and Justice XI; but the trumps bear no Hebrew letters. If we allow for the great difference in artistic style, many of the designs are reasonably faithful to those of the trump cards of the Tarot de Marseille. Divergences worthy of note are as follows; the quotations are from Waite's own descriptions. The Fool (0) is 'a young man in gorgeous vestments' with a rose in one hand and a wand in the other; he 'pauses at the brink of a precipice'. The Magician (I) is 'a youthful figure in the robe of a magician'; above his head is the sign of infinity. On the table before [him] are the symbols of the four Tarot suits'. The High Priestess (II) 'has the lunar crescent at her feet, a horned diadem on her head ... and a large solar cross on her breast. The scroll in her hands is inscribed with the word *Tora* ... She is seated between the white and black pillars – J. and B. – of the mystic Temple'. The letters J. and B. stand for Jachin and Boaz; the symbolism is Masonic. The Emperor (IV) has no shield, and is seen full face. 'He has a form of the *Crux ansata* for his sceptre.' The Lovers (VI) has a great sun at the top, 'and beneath it ... a great winged figure with arms extended'. Below him are a man and woman, naked. Two sphinxes, one black and one white, draw the Chariot (VII). Over the head of the woman representing Strength (VIII) hangs the sign of infinity. The Wheel of Fortune (X) is not apparently in motion and is seen directly from the side. It bears the 'transliteration of *Taro* as *Rota* ... inscribed on' it, alternating 'with the letters of the Divine Name'. 'The four living creatures of Ezekiel occupy the angles of the card. At the top of the wheel is a Sphinx bearing a sword; on the left a serpent, representing Typhon; at bottom right of the wheel the dog-headed god, Anubis. The gallows from which the Hanged Man (XII) is suspended by his right ankle is in the shape of the letter T; his left leg is crossed behind his right, the calf horizontal. There is a halo about his head. Death (XIII) is an equestrian skeleton in armour, bearing a black banner emblazoned with the Mystic Rose. Temperance (XIV) is an angel, with large outspread wings and the sign of the sun on his forehead. The Devil (XV) is said by Waite to be the Horned God of Mendes:¹⁵ 'a reversed pentagram is on the

forehead'. The two chained figures, otherwise human, have horns and tails. The Sun (XIX) shows a single 'naked child mounted on a white horse and displaying a red standard'. With a curious inconsistency, Waite usually calls these cards 'Trumps Major', although he refers to the suit cards as the 'Lesser Arcana'. He drew the imagery of the trumps from Éliphas Lévi, as he acknowledges for the Chariot and the Wheel, from Paul Christian, from Papus and from his personal ideas.

Grand Orient

Waite had perceived that it was fruitless to guard the Tarot itself as a secret; the time had come to arouse general public interest in it. He was a professional writer on the occult, and the publication of a Tarot pack was entirely in line with his work in that field; but now was the time to put some information about the Tarot into print.

His first effort in this direction was not under his own name, however. There had been published in 1889 in London a little book entitled *A Handbook of Cartomancy, Fortune-Telling and Occult Divination*, the author given as 'Grand Orient'. This was a popular guide to many methods of obtaining answers to questions about the future; there was in fact only a brief section on cartomancy, using the regular 52-card pack.¹⁶ Second and third editions appeared in 1891 and 1897, and in 1909 an enlarged edition with *Manual* substituted for *Handbook* in the title. A fifth edition, with the altered title, followed in 1912, along with *The Book of Destiny and the Art of Reading Therein*, again by Grand Orient, in the same year. *The Book of Destiny* contains nothing about cartomancy; a lengthy section concerns the 'secret doctrine' of the 72 Cabalistic 'Angels or Genii'. Grand Orient was in fact A.E. Waite. The style alone betrays the authorship of these books: who but Waite ever used the term 'root-matter' (*Book of Destiny*, p. xi)?

Among the extensive additions to the *Manual* of 1909 was a section called 'The Book of the Secret Word and the Higher Way to Fortune', on the Tarot.¹⁷ The Tarot pack is called the *Book of Thoth* and described as 'the most richly productive mode for the induction of prophetic insight'. 'All the cards', we are told, 'are covered with hieroglyphs ... connected intimately with the mysteries of occult science.' Tarot cards are said to have been the precursors of ordinary playing cards. They have four uses: to play a game of skill and hazard, now long out of vogue (which it by no means was); for ordinary fortune-telling; for other divinatory practices

(not specified); and for the 'higher uses of the imagination in the mystic oracles of the soul'. The true manner of using them for this last purpose 'is reserved by certain sanctuaries of adeptship'. Here Grand Orient becomes confidential: 'if ... it were assumed that I – whose identity has been concealed for many years of occult life under the name of Grand Orient – hold any place or office in these Secret Temples, it must be obvious that I could not ... betray their mysteries.' Coming down to what he *can* say on the basis of his own researches, he advises readers to be indifferent to the questions whether the cards are of recent invention or very ancient, as, he says, they undoubtedly are, and whether they originated in Egypt or much further East (he does not allow any third possibility). The *Manual*, though not the *Handbook*, was published by Rider; a footnote notifies readers that they can apply to the publisher for the prices of Tarot packs (presumably those designed by Pamela Smith); in the 1912 edition, the book *The Key to the Tarot* is mentioned as well.

The trump cards (so designated) are listed in the Tarot de Marseille order, with Justice and Fortitude or Strength in their traditional places as 8 and 11 respectively. Their nomenclature has an occultist tinge: trump 2 is called 'the High Priestess', trump 5 'the Pope or Hierophant', trump 15 'the Devil or Typhon'. Trump 16 is called 'the Ruined Tower' and trump 20 'the Last Judgement'. With these exceptions, their names are as in the Tarot de Marseille, trump 1 being 'the Juggler' and trump 21 'the World'. The Fool is placed at the end rather than between 20 and 21 in Lévi's fashion, and numbered '22 = 0'.

There are said to be five court cards in each suit, namely Ace, King, Queen, Prince or Knight and Novice, Page or Squire.¹⁸ The suits themselves are Cups, Swords, Wands and Pantacles (with an *a*); they correspond respectively to Hearts, Spades, Diamonds and Clubs. In giving this surprising correspondence, Waite was following the Cypher MS;¹⁹ it would be natural to take Wands (Bats) to correspond with Clubs and Pantacles or Pentacles with Diamonds.

Only the 21 trumps are used in the reading; the Fool, representing the querent, is placed separately. The querent should first spend time in recollection and silent prayer. Then the 21 trumps are shuffled and dealt; Grand Orient thinks it sufficient to spread them in a line. Three sets of significations are listed for them, according to the nature of the question whose answer is sought: one for the world of human prudence (questions

about everyday life); one for the world of conformity (by which is meant institutional religion); and one for the world of (spiritual) attainment. Sample readings are given, one for each world.

The 1912 edition was enriched by a new section on cartomancy with the Piquet pack; but the section on the Tarot remained unchanged. A new Preface mentions *The Key to the Tarot*, but not its author's name, as describing 'the use of the symbols for other and higher purposes than those of fortune-telling'; it is said to follow and extend the lines sketched in the *Manual*.

The Key to the Tarot

In December 1909 Waite published a short essay, 'The Tarot: a Wheel of Fortune' in the *Occult Review*,^{[20](#)} to publicise the imminent publication of the pack designed by Pamela Colman Smith. Misspelling her name, he announces that he has 'interested a very skilful and original artist ... Miss Pamela Coleman Smith' in the proposal to design a set and thereby 'to rectify the symbolism'. In this, he says, 'we have had other help from one who is deeply versed in the subject'.^{[21](#)} He twice refers to the *Manual of Cartomancy*, and declares that the secret doctrine embodied in the Tarot 'is of all ages and peoples'. He calls trump I 'the Magician', and says that it is the card of illumination; and he connects the Tarot with the Grail legend by equating the Knight of Swords with 'Galahad on the Quest'.

Waite wrote a little book, *The Key to the Tarot*, to accompany the new pack. It was published by Rider in 1910, and reissued in 1911, in expanded form, as *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, with black-and-white illustrations of all Pamela Colman Smith's designs. It was reprinted at least as late as 1972. Though Waite recognised that the Tarot could not be kept a secret, he could not bring himself to believe that there remained *no* secret knowledge to which he himself, with a very restricted circle of others, was privy. This divided frame of mind accounts for the deep ambivalence perceptible in his book.

To a greater extent than any of his occultist colleagues, Waite had something of a scholar's temperament; in contrast to Westcott, he was reluctant to make plain factual assertions unwarranted by the evidence. This made him highly critical of the writings of his fellow-occultists; but his critical attitude was surely not prompted by this motive alone. He was unable to mention other occultists, even Éliphas Lévi, whom he was

especially anxious to extol, without making some disparaging or sneering comment; he seems to have been actuated by mingled feelings of envy and superiority. His writing often creates the illusion of the work of a fastidious scholar repelled by the grandiose and irrational pretensions of occultism. It is an illusion, however: Waite, a member of the Golden Dawn and the leader of one of the fragments into which it broke, was as committed to occultism as any of those whom he so scornfully rebuked. What he gave away openly with one hand, therefore, he took back surreptitiously with the other. In cryptic sentences whose meaning slithers from the mind's grasp, he insinuates that while, at the phenomenal level, the assertions of the occultist writers may be riddled with factual inaccuracies, still, in some profounder sense, which he is not able (because not permitted) fully to convey, their claims are warranted and their statements true. The outcome of reading him is thus a double vision. He explains clearly why, in purely factual respects, the beliefs of the occultists are unfounded; but one is left to gather that to reject the inner core of those beliefs is to be guilty of superficiality and disrespect for a profound tradition.

In *The Key to the Tarot*, Waite refutes the wild historical claims of his predecessors, debunking Court de Gébelin's theory of the Egyptian origin of Tarot cards, ridiculing Etteilla 'the *perruquier*', and affirming that the history of the cards does not extend further back than the XIV century and that there is no testimony earlier than Court de Gébelin either to their use in cartomancy or to the ascription to them of an esoteric meaning. In an annotated bibliography to the book, he roundly censures Lévi, Papus and others for their uncritical methods and habit of unsupported assertion.²² In the notes to his translation, called *Transcendental Magic*, of Lévi's *Dogme et rituel*, and in his Preface to the translation of Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, he gives detailed disproofs of their various claims to have discovered allusions to the Tarot in occultist writers before Court de Gébelin.

Yet, save for his refusal to endorse demonstrably false historical claims, Waite's procedure in the *Key* tallies with that of other occultists; he does not want to diminish by a jot their claims for the mystic significance of the Tarot pack. He disparages the use of the cards for divination, which he denies to be their original purpose, and hints that he has some far profounder meaning to impart; but he fails to impart it. For Waite hoped to

preserve the secrecy of a core of the esoteric knowledge, taught to initiates of the Golden Dawn under oaths that it would not be divulged. He recognised that some of it had been broadcast, and that the Tarot pack itself, understood as a reservoir of deep meanings, might now be promoted for the public at large. He nevertheless trusted that the most precious part of that teaching might continue to be reserved for the inner circles alone. He twice declares in the *Key* that there is a secret tradition concerning the Tarot, implying that he is privy to it.²³ He seems out to mystify rather than to enlighten, darkly alluding to esoteric knowledge that he may not, and others cannot, communicate.

The fact remains ... that a secret tradition exists concerning the Tarot, and as there is always the possibility that such minor arcana of the mysteries may be made public with a flourish of trumpets, it will be as well to go before the event and to warn those who are curious in such matters that ... much will remain to be said after any pretended unveiling ... The present work is designed ... to introduce a rectified set of the cards themselves and to tell the unadorned truth concerning them, so far as this is possible in the outer circles. As regards the sequence of symbols, their ultimate and highest meaning ... will be understood by those who have received some part of the secret tradition. As regards the verbal meanings allocated to the more important Trump cards, they are designed to set aside the follies and impostures of past attributions, ... and to take care ... that they are the truth so far as they go. It is regrettable ... that I must confess to certain reservations, but there is a question of honour at issue.²⁴

With characteristic arrogance, Waite loftily defies the readers' curiosity about his transposition of Justice and Strength:

for reasons which satisfy myself, this card [Strength] has been interchanged with that of Justice, which is usually numbered eight. As the variation carries nothing with it which will signify to the reader, there is no cause for explanation.²⁵

The fact that the reasons satisfy him conveys to us to whom the variation *does* signify something that he accepted both the attribution of Hebrew letters to the trumps according to the Golden Dawn system and the consequent association with them of the signs of the zodiac. Speaking of his 'rectified' Tarot pack, Waite says:

For the variations in the symbolism by which the designs have been affected, I alone am responsible. In respect of the Major Arcana, they are sure to occasion criticism among students, actual and imputed. I wish therefore to say ... that I care nothing utterly for any view that may find expression. There is a secret tradition concerning the Tarot, as well as a secret doctrine contained therein; I have followed some part of it without exceeding the limits which are drawn about matters of this kind and belong to the laws of honour. This tradition has two parts, and as one of them has passed into writing it seems to follow that it

may be betrayed at any moment, which will not signify, because the second ... has not so passed at present and is held by very few indeed. I ask, therefore, to be distinguished from a few writers in recent times who have thought fit to hint that they could say a good deal more if they liked, for we do not speak the same language; but also from any one who ... may say that she or he will tell all, because they have only the accidents and not the essentials necessary for such disclosure ... I have said as much as I can; it is the truth after its own manner, and as much as can be expected or required in those outer circles where the qualifications of special research cannot be expected.²⁶

These excerpts well convey the tone of supercilious superiority common in Waite's writing. It is impossible to draw the distinction he asks for in the passage just quoted: if, in that passage and the other two quoted, he is not hinting that he could say a good deal more if he liked, or if honour did not forbid him, his words bear no sense whatever. But when, after this ambiguous build-up, it comes down to what honour does permit him to say, all that we are given are the standard occultist and divinatory meanings of the cards, together with some methods of telling fortunes with them.

Waite twice runs through the 22 Trumps Major, the first time principally to report the interpretations of others, of which he repudiates the more fantastic; only about the Hermit – of which he admits Prudence as one, but ‘the most negligible’, of several meanings, does he expatiate at length. The second list describes in detail the designs for the ‘rectified’ pack executed by Pamela Colman Smith;²⁷ it is from this that excerpts were previously quoted. This list also gives Waite's own preferred interpretation of the symbolic meanings. A characteristic remark, concerning the Hanged Man, is ‘One of his editors [Westcott is meant] suggests that Éliphas Lévi did not know the meaning, which is unquestionable – nor did the editor himself’. Waite's own explanation is ‘that it expresses the relation, in one of its aspects, between the Divine and the Universe’.²⁸ Finally, observing with distaste that ‘the allocation of a fortune-telling aspect to these cards is the story of a prolonged impertinence’,²⁹ he sets out a third list, giving the divinatory meanings of all 78 cards, and goes on to describe three cartomantic procedures. Waite had the egoist's trick of insisting on both eating his cake and having it, while denying to others the right either to have or to eat theirs. Several references to Grand Orient will be noted in the *Key*; it will be no surprise that Waite always approves of his views.

Neither in the instructions he gave to Pamela Colman Smith nor in composing *The Key to the Tarot* did Waite allow himself to drop any hint

to members of the ‘outer circles’ concerning the secret attribution, save for the transposition of Strength and Justice, which he refused to explain. He could not have Hebrew letters put upon the trump cards, because that would have had either to accord with an attribution he considered false or to reveal the secret attribution. He did indeed mention the existence of such attributions, but in a dismissive fashion: ‘I have also not adopted the prevailing attribution of the cards to the Hebrew alphabet – firstly, because it would serve no purpose in an elementary handbook; secondly, because every attribution is wrong’.³⁰ In all three of his lists, he places the Fool between the XX and the XXI, as Lévi had done, characteristically disparaging this allocation of it: ‘The arrangement is ridiculous on the surface, which does not much signify, but it is also wrong on the symbolism.’³¹ Circumspect as he was, however, he was obviously anxious lest the secret tradition be betrayed, or further betrayed. He must surely have had Aleister Crowley in mind.

What did Waite mean by speaking of the ‘two parts’ of the secret tradition, one of which had ‘passed into writing’ and the other had not? Much of the ‘secret tradition’, including the secret attribution, was contained in Book T, read by those who attained the Second Order; but the attribution itself was revealed to Golden Dawn members much earlier, when they reached the 3° = 8° grade. Crowley had published his *Liber 777*, in which the secret attribution was revealed, in 1909, a year before the *Key* appeared, and in the very year that it was being written. Since he says of the one part of the secret tradition only that ‘it may be betrayed at any moment’, it seems that Waite, when writing the *Key*, did not yet know of 777, nor that Crowley had already betrayed an important component of the secret tradition, but strongly suspected that such a betrayal would occur. Possibly Waite hoped that the traitor, who had not been admitted to the Second Order in London, and who had quarrelled with Mathers, his former protector, had had no access to Book T, and hence could be described as having ‘only the accidents and not the essentials necessary’ for disclosing the secret tradition in full. If so, he was to be disappointed, for in 1912 Crowley published the whole of Book T in *The Equinox*.³² The hypothesis does not quite fit, however, since Waite insisted that what would remain secret was a part of the tradition that had *not* ‘passed into writing’. Eventually, a quarter of a century later, between 1937 and 1940, Dr Israel Regardie, who had for a time been a member of the Stella Matutina, gave

the coup de grâce to the tradition of secrecy by publishing in four volumes all surviving Golden Dawn documents; with that, all of the secret tradition that had passed into writing was made open to view. If there was a further secret that had never been written down, it must have perished with Waite. It is characteristic of his individual brand of doublethink that, long after he had grounds for doubting the authenticity of Mathers's communications with the Secret Chiefs, he should still have been jealously guarding the 'secret tradition' of which they were one of the sources.

The symbolism of the Waite-Smith Tarot

Waite regarded himself not as a magician, but as a mystic. His theory of symbolism protected him from a literal interpretation of the Golden Dawn's teachings and initiatory rites. In his view, all mystic initiations were metaphors for a spiritual rebirth: the initiate was empowered with a new existence and could be confident of eternal life. He wrote of the Tarots by Papus and Mathers that

we get, as it were, a spiritual history of man, or of the soul coming out from the Eternal, passing into the darkness of the material body, and returning to the height.^{[33](#)}

This is the journey that Waite sought to embody in his own Tarot.

Waite did not use the Waite-Smith cards within his Independent and Rectified Rite. They nevertheless employ the pseudo-Cabalism of the Golden Dawn. The astrological references are obvious. There are the 'cabalistic' attributions of the Moon to the Popess, who rests her foot on a crescent; of Venus to the Empress, whose heart-shaped shield bears the sigil of the goddess of love; and of Aries to the Emperor, whose throne is sculpted with rams' heads. These indications suffice to show that Waite accepted the entire scheme taught in the Golden Dawn. Later in life, Waite wrote that the 22 trumps and 22 letters 'belong to each other as much or as little as the twenty-two chapters of the Apocalypse connect with either'.^{[34](#)} And again, 'in the face of existing evidence, the description of the Tarot Trumps Major as a Kabalistic alphabet has as much and as little to support it as the claim that they constitute an Egyptian *Book of Thoth*'.^{[35](#)} But Waite was a master of ambiguity. A careful reading of his statements reveals that he has not utterly dismissed those G.D. doctrines so fervently believed by most of its heirs. For him, the matter was of no consequence,

for he could find the same mystical goal – union with God – in the Book of the Dead, the Cabala, the Grail legend and even the zodiac. Thus, if Mathers' version of the secret tradition was discredited, Waite had another: all human souls yearn for restoration to their heavenly origins, and this aspiration finds spontaneous expression from place to place and age to age, above all in Christian mysticism.

Waite crowded his trumps with emblems familiar in various professedly Rosicrucian secret societies. Roses and crosses, overt and covert, can be found in abundance in his Tarot, together with other Rosicrucian and Masonic images – columns, sphinxes, stars and pentagrams. The many signs of light and brilliance are probably solar symbols, as are the various arcs, wheels and discs (often golden). The Sun's apparent movements, annual and diurnal, symbolise the soul's descent and ascent. The emphasis on gold suggests alchemical imagery: the transmutation of base metals into gold is another metaphor for the purgation and elevation of the soul.³⁶

In Mathers' scheme, the Fool, the Hanged Man and the Last Judgement correspond respectively to the elements of Air, Water and Fire. Waite used them to depict the progress of the soul. For him, the Fool, as trump 0, is the soul newly exiled on earth; but, as the penultimate trump in Lévi's ordering, he is also the redeemed soul about to transcend earthly existence. He carries a white rose, the Golden Dawn's symbol of silence, also equated to the Egyptian lotus, a symbol of rebirth. 'The sun, which shines behind him, knows whence he came, whither he is going and how he will return by another path after many days,' Waite tells us.³⁷

Waite has made the Hanged Man a symbol of initiation, converting the gibbet into a cross and giving the subject a golden halo. The inverted man crosses his legs at a right angle and folds his arms to imply a triangle. The cross over the upward-pointing triangle was the specific emblem of the Golden Dawn itself; on Waite's card, the halo occupies the place of the sun sometimes framed by the triangle.³⁸ 'He who can understand that the story of his higher nature is embedded in this symbolism will receive intimations concerning a great awakening that is possible, and will know that after the sacred Mystery of Death there is a glorious Mystery of Resurrection', Waite declared.³⁹ Discussing the next card, Death, he remarked that 'the suggestion of death which I have made in connection with the previous card is, of course, to be understood mystically'.⁴⁰ A

mock death is a typical feature of mystic initiations.⁴¹ The Hanged Man is the initiated soul, assured of his heavenly reward.

Waite's version of the Last Judgement shows the heavenly reward; the Christian doctrine of resurrection is given an occult twist. The ultimate goal of the G.D. initiate was identification with his Good Genius, here symbolised by the Angel, who, in Colman Smith's designs, recalls the personification of Temperance. Temperance, in the Golden Dawn, was analogous to the Holy Guardian Angel, who is one's divine self.⁴²

Let the card continue to depict, for those who can see no further, the Last Judgment and the resurrection in the natural body; but let those who have inward eyes look and discover therewith. They will understand that it has been called truly in the past a card of eternal life, and for this reason it may be compared with that which passes under the name of Temperance.⁴³

Waite makes the same association of the four suits with the four elements as had Mathers, and renders it abundantly clear on the court cards. There are salamanders and heraldic lions on those of the fire suit of Wands. The King of the water suit of Cups is flanked by a dolphin, and the Queen's cape and the canopy of her throne make plain allusions to the sea. The courts of the air suit of Swords show clouds and wind-driven trees, and the back of the King's throne is embellished with sylphs and butterflies. In the earth suit of Pentacles, much lush vegetation is to be seen on the court cards. The picture designs of the numeral cards from 2 to 9 in each suit were made in large part to indicate their divinatory significance. On each of the Aces, the suit-sign rests in a hand that emanates supernaturally from a stylised cloud. In the design of the Aces, Waite followed rather closely the description in Mathers' booklet of 1888. He added Christian symbolism to the Ace of Cups, however. 'A dove, bearing in its bill a cross-marked Host, descends to place the Wafer in the Cup,' he wrote.⁴⁴

If Waite had been consistent, he would have excluded all magical and divinatory symbols from his Tarot in favour of strictly mystical ones. Consistency was never one of his virtues, however. He reprobated the practice of magic and poured scorn on its theory; but he could not bear to dispense with any of its symbols or its ritual. He derided techniques for revealing the future; but in the end he had no other use for his Tarot pack

to propose to those purchasers among whom the qualifications of special research could not be expected.

CHAPTER 9

The Secret Chiefs and the Crowley-Harris Tarot

How the Golden Dawn fragments fared

Before the crisis, communication with the Secret Chiefs had been a function reserved to Mathers. After it, R.W. Felkin, virtually in sole control of the Stella Matutina, became obsessed with getting back in touch with them, and by 1906 was communicating with them by automatic writing.¹ Troubled about the credentials of the Golden Dawn, he developed an obsession with meeting German Rosicrucians and members of the Third Order in the flesh. He visited Germany for these purposes in 1906, without any serious result. He went again, accompanied by his second wife, in 1908, and this time believed that he had met ‘several members of the Third Order’. In about 1908 he established contact on the astral plane with an ‘Arab Teacher’ named Ara Ben Shemesh. In 1909 a message from the Secret Chiefs was astrally transmitted, requiring members of the Second Order to sign a pledge that they fully believed in the genuineness of the messages and communications, teachings and rituals of the Order. In Berlin in 1910 Felkin met Rudolf Steiner, who had since 1902 been Secretary General of the German branch of the Theosophical Society, and was also involved with the fringe Masonic Rite of Memphis and Misraïm, of which Theodor Reuss was Grand Master for Germany and Austria;² in 1912 he was to break with the T.S. and found his own Anthroposophical Society. Felkin regarded Steiner as a Rosicrucian; and there seems no doubt that at that date Steiner was conducting initiation rites that purported to be so. Having returned to England in 1910, Felkin sent a friend, Neville Meakin, as his deputy to Germany to carry on negotiations with Steiner; it is interesting that he co-operated with Waite in first conferring on Meakin the grade of Adeptus Minor 5° = 6°, and that Waite had by that date assumed the grade of Adeptus Exemptus 7° = 4° that the original Three Chiefs had had.

In 1907, Felkin and Waite signed a Concordat establishing a state of friendly neutrality between the Stella Matutina and the Independent and Rectified Rite, with a ban on poaching each other's members; the full membership of each was to be known to the Chiefs of each of the two sections, and the membership rolls then in Felkin's possession were to be used in common. In 1910 the Concordat was in danger of being repudiated by Waite when he discovered that Felkin was not, as he had thought, the sole Chief of the Stella Matutina, but that Brodie-Innes had a like authority; but the matter was smoothed over.³ Waite had published his revised rituals in that year; they were thenceforward used also by the Stella Matutina.⁴

Ayton, having finally moved to Saffron Walden in Hertfordshire, died there on New Year's Day 1909. Colonel Webber (Smith) was appointed in his place;⁵ but he is unlikely to have proved much of a hindrance to Waite. Early in the same year, Blackden married and retired to Hampshire, where he lived with his wife in the New Forest.⁶ Waite was thus more effectively than ever in sole charge. In 1912, urged by Brodie-Innes, Felkin revoked the Concordat between the Stella Matutina and Waite's Independent Rite.⁷ When Waite had revised the Outer Order rituals at the time when the Independent and Rectified Rite was founded, his intention was to make them agree more closely with the sketches contained in the Cypher MS. Now he examined the MS, and came to the conclusion that it 'had been ... prepared with intent to deceive'; he therefore set about a more radical revision of the rituals in 1914.⁸ Many of the members voiced strong opposition; these included Marcus Blackden, who reappeared on the scene, advocating in defence of the Cypher MS a crackbrained theory that it derived from an original preserved by Egyptian fellaheen. Waite thereupon dissolved the Order. He founded a new group called the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross in the following year, consecrating its Salvator Mundi Temple on 9 July 1915. Only ten former members of the Independent and Rectified Rite remained faithful; they were joined by ten new recruits. The F.R.C. had only one head, namely Waite as Emperor. It retained the grades, now divided into four Orders; the third corresponded to the old Second Order, but the fourth was never worked. The Fellowship was explicitly Christian and wholly mystical rather than magical; the rituals were revised yet again, with all Egyptian and pagan references excised. Apart from the grades, little connection with the Golden Dawn was any

longer apparent. The F.R.C. was inactive during the Second World War, but remains in existence to this day.

Again in the company of his wife, Felkin made a further visit to Germany in 1912. The couple claimed to have visited five Rosicrucian temples and to have had the grades 8o = 3o and 7o = 4o, or their equivalents, conferred on them respectively. As Magister Templi Felkin now had a higher grade than Mathers had ever claimed; but even his deputy Neville Meakin acquired the grade 6o = 5o in Germany.⁹ W.B. Yeats finally achieved the sub-grade of Theoricus Adeptus Minor only in June 1912; his certificate was signed by Felkin and Westcott, who was evidently not averse to occasional cooperation with the Stella Matutina. In general, much higher grades were now being conferred than under the earlier dispensation. After his return from Germany, Felkin, using the rites in which he had participated in Germany, devised rituals for conferring the grades of Adeptus Major, Adeptus Exemptus and Magister Templi, while Mathers supplied Brodie-Innes with rituals for the first two of these.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Brodie-Innes found himself ever less in sympathy with Felkin's German activities and sceptical of his alleged contact with Secret Chiefs. In December 1910 he revived the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh.¹¹ Regarding Mathers as genuinely in touch with the Third Order, and convinced that interference from him need no longer be feared if the breach between them were healed, he was reconciled with him in 1912. Dr Berridge's Isis Temple was afflicted by dissension at this time, and collapsed in about 1914,¹² although Berridge himself did not die until 1920.¹³ Acknowledging the supreme authority of Mathers, Brodie-Innes became Praemonstrator of a new Alpha et Omega Temple in London. This Temple, with Maiya Curtis-Webb (later Mrs Tranchell-Hayes) as its head, still acknowledged the authority of Brodie-Innes in 1919. It was in that year that Westcott left England to settle in South Africa, where he died of Bright's disease on 30 July 1925.

Having returned from Germany in 1912, Felkin visited New Zealand with his family, where he set up a new Stella Matutina temple. He had planned that Meakin would take charge of the Amoun Temple, but Meakin died unexpectedly in the autumn of that year. The Felkins returned to England, but in 1914 set out once more for Germany, accompanied by Miss Christina Mary Stoddart, who had attained an important position in the London temple. The Felkins now believed that they were to be shown

the tomb of Christian Rosenkreutz, in whose real existence they had a firm belief and who they believed was shortly to manifest himself once more in the flesh. Their investigations preoccupied them so consumingly that they failed to notice the imminence of war until after it had actually broken out. They nevertheless contrived to return from Germany to England in wartime; Miss Stoddart had left twelve days before war was declared.

The Stella Matutina was in a flourishing condition at that time: in 1915 it had 83 members in the Outer Order and 40 in the Second Order. Yeats attained the grade $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$ in 1914.¹⁴ In 1916, Felkin established three new Temples, a Hermes Temple in Bristol, and, in London, a Merlin Temple for refugees from Waite's defunct Independent Rite and a Secret College restricted to members of the Soc. Ros. He also promulgated a new Constitution, and appointed Miss Stoddart, the Reverend Will Reason and the Reverend F.N. Heazell Joint Chiefs of the Temple; he then left permanently for New Zealand. Though Felkin tried to control the affairs of the Amoun Temple from afar, it soon became rent with dissensions. When, in 1919, Reason announced his intention of resigning, Miss Stoddart, who was Imperatrix of the Temple,¹⁵ proposed W.B. Yeats as Chief in his place; but Felkin appointed Dr Hammond instead. In 1919 the disputes became so disruptive that the Temple was closed down.¹⁶ The disputes were essentially over Felkin's authority. Many of the members remained loyal, but Miss Stoddart was bitterly opposed to him. She had contracted Felkin's own disease, in a yet more virulent form: she was desperately conducting 'investigations' to determine the true origin and nature of the Order. She wanted to return to Germany herself, to ascertain the nature of Felkin's contacts there, but never succeeded in going. Dr Hammond urged her to resign; but she would not do so until she had resolved her uncertainties.

Mathers died of influenza in Paris in 1918. His widow Moina returned to London in the following year, and founded a second Alpha et Omega Temple in London, of which she was the Chief, independent of but in amicable relations with the other Alpha et Omega Temple controlled by Brodie-Innes.¹⁷ However, as Dion Fortune famously remarked, 'the cloak of Elijah did not necessarily descend on Mrs Elishah';¹⁸ Moina Mathers did not run her Temple with great success, and expended much energy in recruiting members in the United States by very ill-judged means.¹⁹

Felkin's daughter arrived in London in 1920, having first visited Dr Steiner in Germany. Her intention was to resolve 'the crisis in the London Temple' by re-establishing her father's authority; but she behaved with so confused a mixture of irresolution and command that she eventually left with nothing settled. She declared that Felkin had expelled Miss Stoddart, who could therefore no longer continue in office, although the expulsion would be suspended until she had had an opportunity to state her case. A meeting of the Second Order (of which there were 45 members in 1922) was eventually called on 23 April 1921 to organise a plebiscite to determine whether the members would acknowledge Felkin or follow Miss Stoddart, who predictably denounced both meeting and plebiscite as unconstitutional. The future of the Order could not be resolved, however, until a committee of three, charged with enquiring into 'the Continental source' of Felkin's authority and teaching, had reported; by early May Miss Felkin had left for New Zealand. The composition of the committee is surprising: along with Carnegie Dickson, an opponent of Miss Stoddart, and Mrs Macrae, a friend of hers, it contained Brodie-Innes, no believer in Felkin's German Rosicrucians:²⁰ here is a further instance of collaboration between adherents of different Golden Dawn fragments. It is unclear whether this committee ever reported. Dickson tried to enlist the help of Brodie-Innes in wresting the documents and properties of the Order from Miss Stoddart; but Brodie-Innes would not cooperate. W.B. Yeats left the Order in 1923, noting in his *Autobiographies* the occurrence in it of 'quarrels caused by men, otherwise worthy, who claimed a Rosicrucian sanction for their fantasies'.²¹ It does not appear that the branch of the Stella Matutina centred around the Amoun Temple long survived his departure.²²

Just as the parent Order had first fallen apart in 1900, so the fragments into which it broke fell apart, and for the same reason: the fraudulent basis on which the Golden Dawn had been founded. Mathers had denied that Westcott had truly been in touch with German Rosicrucians, and had cast doubt on the authenticity of the Cypher MS. When Waite became convinced that the Cypher MS was indeed fraudulent, he dissolved his Rectified Rite. Felkin had tried to put the matter right by contacting German members of the Third Order on his own account, and persuaded himself that he had done so. Miss Stoddart had tried to uncover the mystery by her 'investigations', and ended by adopting an even more

preposterous explanation, for she had developed insane anti-Semitic fantasies in terms of which she finally interpreted what she had been unable to understand. By 1921 she had concluded that the Stella Matutina, and all other occult orders, were instruments of evil. She still believed in the astral communications that had been received, but they originated, in her view, not from Secret Chiefs, but from a supreme and invisible hierarchy of Cabalistic Jews, who were using the occult orders to seize world power. She resigned from the Order with a sense of relief, and in 1930 published a book, *Light-Bearers of Darkness*, under the pseudonym 'Inquire Within', in which she expounded her lunatic views and gave an account – in part derived from Felkin – of the history of the Stella Matutina.

It was only the London branch of the Stella Matutina that had disintegrated, however: the Hermes Temple in Bristol and hence the Order, as such, continued to function until the 1960s.^{[23](#)} The original three Chiefs of the Hermes Temple were all women, the most important of them Mrs C.E. Hughes, known as Hope Hughes. When the Temple ceased activity in the 1960s, the three Chiefs were Hope Hughes' widower Donald, the widow of Carnegie Dixon and Mrs Bingham-Hall.^{[24](#)}

The Order of Alpha et Omega (A.O.) lasted into the 1930s. Brodie-Innes died in December 1923, and the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh then closed down. When Moina Mathers died in 1928, control of the London Temple she had run passed into the hands of E.J.L. Garstin, while Maiya Tranchell-Hayes continued to be in charge of that which had previously been under the supreme authority of Brodie-Innes.

The Book of the Law

In 1912 Crowley received a visit from Theodor Reuss, who was then Frater Superior or Outer Head of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), a German sodality founded about 1904 and linked to the Martinist Order over which Papus presided. The original Order of Knights Templar had been savagely repressed by Philippe IV of France in the early XIV century; its Grand Master Jacques de Molay was burned at the stake in 1314. The Order had been discredited by false rumours of homosexual orgies, intercourse with demons and bestiality – all consecrated to a mysterious idol called Baphomet. In the XVIII century numerous Masonic groups claimed a link with the Templars. The O.T.O. professed to have recovered the secrets of

the Templars: far from rejecting the rumours as calumnies, the O.T.O. happily accepted the proposition that sex was an effective magical technique. In 1912 its journal stated clearly:

Our Order possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely the teaching of sexual magic, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Nature, all the symbolism of Freemasonry and all systems of religion.^{[25](#)}

According to Crowley's own account of Reuss's visit,^{[26](#)} Reuss complained that Crowley's writings were demonstrably derived from the O.T.O., and objected to his divulging their highest magic; the revelations were supposed to be in his *Book of Lies*. Crowley averred that he had not yet been initiated into the Order's inner secrets, but would enjoy the experience; for sexual magic was practised only in the VII°, VIII° and IX° degrees, to which Crowley had not attained. Reuss thereupon received him into the IX° degree of the O.T.O. This story, improbable in itself, is belied by the fact that the *Book of Lies* was not published until 1913.^{[27](#)} In a recent book, Gerald del Campo controverts the story and tells a more interesting one.^{[28](#)} In del Campo's account, when Reuss met Crowley in 1910, he admitted him to degree VII° in the O.T.O., as a token of his support in the conflict with Mathers, who was then seeking an injunction from the courts to prevent further publication of G.D. material. Crowley worked through the VII°, VIII° and IX° degrees between 1910 and 1912,^{[29](#)} in which year Reuss conferred on him the degree of X° with the aim of reviving the flagging interest in the O.T.O. The X° degree was a purely administrative grade, the title being given to the head of each section of the Order;^{[30](#)} so, in 1913, Crowley became the Chief of the Mystera Mystica Maxima (M.M.M.), the English branch of the O.T.O., with the title 'Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis': he referred to himself as 'Baphomet'.

In 1913 Crowley published the record of a visionary experience that he had had years before. When on their honeymoon in 1904, he and Rose had paused in Cairo. Rose mysteriously claimed to perceive the thoughts of Horus, a god of ancient Egypt, of whom she was otherwise ignorant. In a Cairo museum, she identified him by indicating an appropriate idol. She told her husband that Horus desired to communicate. Crowley needed only to await contact in his study at noon on 8, 9 and 10 April. He duly received a mysterious visitor named Aiwaz, who was, in Crowley's perception, one

of the long-sought Secret Chiefs and no less than Horus himself. Aiwaz, as Crowley later understood, was also his own higher genius and perhaps his Guardian Angel.³¹ This is the angel allegedly available through the magic of Abra-Melin. In the Golden Dawn's dogma, a Secret Chief is distinct from a Guardian Angel, and both are certainly distinct from Horus; Crowley, however, met all three messengers in one.

The collaboration, whoever took part, consisted of three one-hour sessions and resulted in the *Liber Legis* (*The Book of the Law*).³² *Liber Legis* contains not the personal opinions of Aiwaz (or Horus, also called Hoor-pakraat) or Chioa Khan (or Crowley, also called Ra-hoor-khuit), but the testimony of the Goddess Nuit and her consort, Hadit. The book also quotes a priestly scribe named Ankh-f-n-Khonsu (meaning: 'His life is in Khonsu [the moon god]'). Crowley knew the priest's name from a painted stele in the Boulaq Museum. The artefact had attracted his attention because it bore the number 666, the number of the Beast of the Apocalypse. He subsequently decided that one of his previous incarnations had been as Ankh-f-n-Khonsu. The sympathetic reader will understand why Crowley spent the rest of his life trying to make sense of the multiplex transmission from a priest, an angel, a god and a goddess. Nuit personifies infinite circumference (the sky and outer space), Hadit the infinitesimal centre (a star, the self, the spark of Life).³³ The basic text predicts the Age of Horus, essentially a new religion replacing all other religions. The timeless Nuit had apparently been reading Rabelais (d. 1553), who advised, '*Fay ce que voudras*'. Nuit's law is: 'Do what thou wilt.' She enjoins Crowley to found the new religion, an élite movement of highly evolved 'Thelemites'. The term again comes from Rabelais, whose hero Gargantua founds the Abbey of Theleme where standard Christian values are purposely inverted. The name 'Theleme' derives from the Greek *thelema*, meaning 'will'. (Nuit and Hadit, like Crowley, are fluent in English and conversant with Hebrew, Latin and Greek.) Other key images in *Liber Legis* are: the Beast, the Scarlet Woman, and one who will come after the Beast as his child. There are also allusions to the Tarot, with some trumps involved in the abundant numerological puzzles posed by Aiwaz. The name 'Aiwaz', in Hebrew numerology, has the value of 93, a number recurring in Crowley's mystical calculations. He later used an alternative spelling, 'Aiwass', which, by Greek numerology, converts to 418, regarded as the number of the Thelemic movement.

Crowley had then written to Mathers to announce that the Secret Chiefs had appointed him, Crowley, as visible head of the Order of the Golden Dawn with a new dispensation. Mathers, unsurprisingly, did not reply, and from that moment Crowley regarded him as an unmitigated enemy. The two supposedly engaged in a long-distance duel by magical means. History does not record the havoc wreaked on Mathers when Crowley sent Beelzebub and 49 other demons to chastise him in his Paris flat, but Crowley felt vindicated. He was now supreme magus.

Aleister Crowley cannot be understood unless it is grasped that, although he treated other human beings, and indeed everything else, with callous frivolity, he was totally serious about magic: his magic was an amalgam of what he had learned from Mathers, in the Golden Dawn and from the *Abramelin* book, the sexual magic he learned in the O.T.O., and what he understood himself to have learned from *The Book of the Law*. His increasing notoriety, inflamed by the court cases, had discouraged applications for membership in the Argenteum Astrum. At first he treated the M.M.M., for which exorbitant membership fees were charged, as a recruiting agency for the A.A., but subsequently new applicants to the A.A. were diverted to the M.M.M.³⁴ The A.A. finally ceased all working in England in 1914, although the Order itself continued to exist for many years, and apparently still does in California; it adopted the practice of alternating a five-year Period of Silence with a five-year Period of Speech.³⁵ *The Equinox* became an organ of the O.T.O. as well as of the A.A. Thus by 1915 only two of the four splinters from the Golden Dawn were still active in Britain.

The later career of Aleister Crowley

Crowley and Neuburg were together in Paris at the close of 1913. They engaged in six weeks of sexual rituals intended to evoke the planetary gods, a period that has been dubbed ‘the Paris working’. Crowley regarded Neuburg as psychologically unstable and attempted to give him guidance. But according to Crowley, Neuburg suffered a ‘final breakdown’, which Crowley attributed to Neuburg’s ‘racial congenital cowardice’, an allusion to his Jewish background.³⁶ In fact, Neuburg had received unexpected funds, and when he refused to share them with Crowley, their friendship was ruptured forever.

At the onset of the First World War, British and European audiences lost interest in Crowley's frivolous performances, on or off stage. He had no profession and had exhausted his inheritance. Although his disciples occasionally paid, and his books sometimes sold, the support was never steady. He moved to the United States. Leila Waddell followed but soon left him. In New York, he edited anti-British propaganda; he had ingratiated himself with German sympathisers through his pretence of being a disaffected Irishman.

Funded mostly by members of the O.T.O., he travelled through the USA and Canada. He now promoted himself to the grade 9° = 2° Magus with the name '*To Mega Therion*' ('The Great Beast'). This elevation was accomplished in 1916 in a cottage near Bristol, New Hampshire, where Crowley baptised a frog as Jesus Christ, then crucified and ate it.³⁷ This squalid blasphemy contrasts with Mathers' grandiose ceremonies. Such cruel childishness would not appear conducive to attracting disciples: yet surprisingly many men and women desired not only his company but his sexual attention. One of Crowley's new associates – or victims – was a school teacher, Leah Hirsig.³⁸ She satisfied Aiwaz's prophecy that Crowley would possess a 'Scarlet Woman'. This name came to mean not one woman, but a kind of office held by several women, sometimes concurrently. Leah was also called Alostrael and The Ape of Thoth. She conceived Crowley's child.

Crowley aimed at further publications. He met Mrs George E. Jordan, better known as Evangeline Adams, an astrologer and adviser to celebrities.³⁹ She invited Crowley to collaborate on an astrological manual. She had been tried in 1914 for violating New York's law against fortune-telling, but had defended astrology as a science. She persuaded the judge by plausibly interpreting a horoscope. Its subject was unknown to her but known to the judge as being his own son.⁴⁰ The acquittal of Evangeline Adams helped to elevate the status of modern astrologers. According to Crowley, however, she unfortunately lacked an understanding of simple astronomy, and when he presumed to enlighten her, she became indignant and insulting. Crowley aborted their project, fearful that he would have to do all the work. Besides, he thought she was cheating him of the profits.⁴¹ As remarked by Symonds and Grant, it is unclear how Crowley could have been cheated since the astrology book was never accepted by a publisher, let alone printed and sold.⁴² After the

war ended, Crowley stayed in America to publish the spring issue of *The Equinox* in 1919. Then he returned to England.

His pro-German propaganda during the War was not forgiven him, despite his explanation that he had cleverly tried to prod the German sympathisers to such rhetorical extremes that they would discredit themselves. He chided British Intelligence for failing to recognise his strategy and lend him their support.

Crowley suffered from bronchitis and from asthma, an ailment oddly prevalent among practising occultists.⁴³ The warm climate and relaxed pace of Sicily beckoned to him in 1920. At Cefalù, he rented a 'villa' – actually an insanitary hovel – and set up his famous Abbey of Thelema. Over fifteen years had elapsed since the goddess Nuit had charged him to assemble the Thelemites. At last he had accepted this mission. Although outcast, impoverished and addicted to heroin, he gave himself the ultimate grade of $10^{\circ} = 1^{\circ}$ Ipsissimus ('Veriest Self'). He summoned Leah Hirsig and other women. They spent their time combating each other, satisfying Crowley's appetites, and placating spirits, all three activities requiring the copious use of drugs. The children of various unions were largely neglected. Leah's daughter, Poupée, died in October, and Leah miscarried a few days later. To escape the stress, Crowley went to France. There he met J.W.N. Sullivan, who wrote on science and mathematics, mostly for the *Times* and the *Athenaeum*. Crowley promptly seduced Sullivan's wife, Sylvia, who became pregnant. Both men claimed proprietorship of the woman, but the argument soon became moot, for she died of typhus. As atonement and therapy, Sullivan wrote a substantial book, *But for the Grace of God*. He would later produce a number of books on science, the history of mathematics and musical composers.

Crowley's prospects now improved. He began writing his memoirs and, in one month, wrote a novel, *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, in which Crowley himself figures as Mr King Lamus. The book was maligned in some quarters, but it does discourage drug abuse by the example of the tormented abusers, who are ultimately cured by the discovery of their True Will. The novel is therefore an idealised version of the Thelemite experiment. (In the real experiment, Crowley never permanently freed himself from drugs.) He also wrote a series of stories featuring a fictional detective, Simon Iff, who has superhuman insight into human nature. Crowley, who was born in the year of Éliphas Lévi's death, claimed to be

the reincarnation of the French magus; he undertook a translation of Lévi's *La Clef des grands mystères*. Also in 1922, Theodor Reuss resigned as head of the O.T.O., and Crowley was named to the office, which he held without opposition for the next three years.

But all these successes were eclipsed by a very great loss. Frederick Charles 'Raoul' Loveday, a new Thelemite only twenty-three years old, fell prey to the insanitary conditions at the Abbey. He contracted hepatitis and enteritis, perhaps aggravated by drinking the blood of a cat, sacrificed in a ritual contrived by Crowley. Loveday died. Bereft in Cefalù was his new bride, an artist's model named Betty May. The widow returned to England, full of outrage and scandalous tales about the Abbey of Thelema. The newspapers were happy to print her stories of devil worship, blood sacrifice, illegal drugs, physical abuse, psychic aberration, promiscuity, bestiality and child neglect. The magazine *John Bull* called Crowley 'the wickedest man in the world'. In Sicily, Mussolini's officials investigated an allegation that Loveday was murdered by magic. They found no evidence, but they would not in any case countenance a secret society. They expelled Crowley.

Crowley fled to Tunis with Leah. The other Thelemites scattered, forming various alliances and living on their wits. Crowley's publishers, alarmed at the scandal, cancelled his contracts. Crowley, during his adversities, usually turned to Allan Bennett. But he could not help at this time. Although he had returned to England, he had isolated himself in the pursuit of alchemy. As his health declined, he decided to return to Ceylon. Sadly, his condition was so poor that he was refused passage, and he died at the port of Liverpool. Crowley received financial and moral support from the O.T.O., whose by-laws required unstinting charity toward fellow members. The German headquarters at Gera, Thuringia, invited Crowley to visit, accompanied by his new Scarlet Woman, who was named Dorothy Olsen, and by Leah Hirsig and Norman Mudd, an old friend of Crowley's and now Leah's lover. When the *Book of the Law* was translated into German, however, Crowley's position as Head of the Order provoked contention among the members; many withdrew their recognition of him, and the O.T.O. split in two, with most of the German members acknowledging Heinrich Tränker (Frater Recnartus) as their Head.⁴⁴

Karl Germer, a member of the O.T.O., was especially generous to Crowley. Crowley now moved to Paris, where he lived with Maria Teresa

Ferrari de Miramar, yet another Scarlet Woman. Back in the USA, the family of another of Crowley's associates, Israel Regardie, learned of his unsavoury reputation and alerted the French officials. They expelled Crowley, and he returned to England. Maria was a Nicaraguan and lacked a British passport, so Crowley married her to enable her to live in Britain. In London, in 1929, Mandrake Press published some of Crowley's stories (*The Stratagem and Other Stories*), a novel (*Moonchild*) and two volumes of his autobiography, which he called an autohagiography. Four more volumes of the latter were neglected when the press closed. In the following year, Crowley deserted Maria. Like Rose, she had become an alcoholic. Ill and penniless, she lived apart from Crowley and died years later in a mental asylum. Regardie left Crowley in 1932.

For Crowley, as for many others, the 1930s were years of economic hardship. He tried to make money through painting, and did exhibit in Berlin in 1930, but no London gallery would show his work. He rented space to mount his own show, but the proprietor, fearing scandal, cancelled the lease. Crowley then began to make an art of litigation. He successfully sued a bookseller for posting a notice that *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* had been suppressed. (It had only gone out of print.) Alan Burnett-Rae, Crowley's young landlord in London, recounts another litigious scheme.⁴⁵ Crowley told Burnett-Rae that his financial backing would enable Crowley to go to America and assert his claim as the head of the Rosicrucian group A.M.O.R.C., which he was sure was worth several million dollars. Burnett-Rae declined this and other offers. He happened to meet one of Crowley's old friends, Nina Hamnett, an artist known primarily through her autobiography, *The Laughing Torso*. In it, she mentioned the Abbey of Thelema as a site where Crowley practised black magic. In 1934, Crowley brought a libel suit against her publisher. Burnett-Rae was surprised at the cordiality between Crowley and Nina Hamnett. This testimony lends credence to the recent surmise that the two authors were actually in collusion, expecting to divide the settlement from Nina Hamnett's publisher.⁴⁶ Crowley's lawyers hoped for helpful testimony from Fuller and Sullivan, but they declined to appear. The defence lawyers raked up Crowley's literary pornography, and Loveday's widow recounted the misadventures at the Abbey. The judge, repelled, threw out the case, and Crowley incurred the court costs. He was forced into bankruptcy (though he possessed little to forfeit). After the trial, he was approached by a

sympathetic girl who requested to have his baby.⁴⁷ He obliged. The new son was christened Aleister Ataturk. The boy lived with his mother while Crowley lived with various women who supported him. He considered them his inferiors and physically abused them.

Crowley's career in magic was largely finished. Among former disciples estranged from him was Victor Neuburg, who had become a poet and an editor of poetry, notably for the *Sunday Referee*. He died of tuberculosis in 1940. Shortly thereafter, a young writer named John Symonds found himself living at Neuburg's last address, and became curious about rumours that Neuburg had died under Crowley's curse. He contacted Crowley, who was living in Hastings, and a cautious friendship ensued. Symonds urged Crowley to reconstitute his notes for the unpublished autohagiography. Crowley complied, and Symonds began to draft Crowley's biography.⁴⁸

The Thoth Tarot

In 1944 Crowley published a book on the Tarot, unoriginally entitled *The Book of Thoth*. He wrote under the name of The Master Therion and published with the O.T.O. from his London address in Jermyn Street. The edition was limited to two hundred copies; a similarly limited edition came out simultaneously in New York. Crowley refers to the trump cards both as 'Keys' and as 'the Atu of Tahuti'. 'Tahuti' is merely a variant on the name 'Thoth'; it will be recalled that the Tarot lecture in the Cypher MS speaks of the trumps as 'the atus of thoth'. 'Atu' is a neologism derived from the French '*atout*', the ordinary word for 'trump', used in Bridge and other games with ordinary cards and for the trumps in the game of Tarot.⁴⁹ The book offers interpretations of the cards and describes procedures for divination. Crowley follows the Golden Dawn system for Tarot symbolism. He tells how he learned the proper attribution of the Hebrew letters to the trumps when he attained the grade 3° = 8° in the Golden Dawn. He claims that the true attribution was known to Éliphas Lévi, who had seen the cipher manuscript which contained it, but had falsified it in his writings in conformity with his oath of secrecy to the Order of Initiates from which he learned the secrets of the Tarot.⁵⁰ 'The true attribution was well guarded in the Sanctuary,' he tells us, and became public only when the secret lecture was published as a result of the

‘catastrophe’ in 1899 and 1900.⁵¹ He does not mention his own role either in the catastrophe or in the publication.

Lady Harris was the illustrator of *The Book of Thoth*.⁵² Born Marguerite Frieda Bloxam, she was the younger daughter of John Astley Bloxam, a well-known London surgeon. She married Sir Percy Harris, Liberal M.P. for Bethnal Green and Chief Whip of the Party. Lady Harris joined one of Crowley's occult groups, presumably the O.T.O.; her initiatory name was Tzaba. From 1938 to 1942, she urged Crowley to refine his concepts of the Tarot, and she dutifully illustrated them, sometimes more than once (see plate 12). The paintings were publicly unveiled on 1 July 1942 at the Berkeley Galleries in London. The works were exhibited again at another West End gallery in the same decade.⁵³

In *Liber Legis*, Aiwaz had referred to the Tarot trumps, saying, ‘All these old letters of my Book are aright; but *Sadhe* [*Tzaddi*] is not the Star’.⁵⁴ The ‘Book’ is the Tarot as the Book of Thoth, and the letters are the Hebrew alphabet: Aiwaz approved the Golden Dawn's alignment of letters with trumps, excepting trump XVII. The announced anomaly worried Crowley for years. The Cypher MS had already taught that trumps VIII and XI should trade places. Crowley found that he could change the attribution of the Star by means of a symmetrical move, which emerges when the trumps are given their zodiacal roles. When Justice (originally trump VIII) and Fortitude (originally trump XI) had been given improved positions as Libra and Leo, the Cypher MS was, in effect, rotating them around the intervening sign of Virgo. Crowley saw that the opposing sign of Pisces could be the pivot around which he might rotate the flanking signs of Aries (the Emperor) and Aquarius (the Star). Crowley dutifully exchanged the letters on the cards. *Tzaddi* was no longer the Star.

Crowley caused some confusion by numbering his trumps in the order of the Tarot de Marseille, which he considered obsolete, although, in assigning Hebrew letters to them, he interchanged both trumps VIII and XI and trumps IV and XVII. He also illogically refused to change the zodiacal attributions of the Star and the Emperor, although he followed Mathers in changing the attributions of zodiacal signs as well as letters to trumps VIII and XI.⁵⁵ Why was the ‘correct’ order ever disturbed, and why was it disturbed in just this way? Crowley never explains. No one should attempt to accommodate the objection of Aiwaz: he poses an insoluble paradox. Given his statement that only *Tzaddi* fails in its correspondence, no

transposition of trumps can satisfy, for it will always disturb some other trump and its letter. In Crowley's Tarot, the Star is relieved of the burdensome *Tzaddi*, but the Emperor is deprived of his approved letter.

In *The Book of Thoth*, Crowley calls trump I 'the Juggler', trump XVI 'the House of God' and trump XXI 'the Universe'; he renames trump VIII (Justice) 'Adjustment', trump XI (Fortitude) 'Lust', trump XIV (Temperance) 'Art' and trump XX (the Judgement) 'Aeon'. The suit signs are called Wands, Swords, Cups and Disks. They correspond precisely with the four Elemental Weapons used in rituals of the Golden Dawn. Crowley's court cards are entirely consonant with Mathers', although rendered to Crowley's taste. The Knights are so called; though mounted, they are treated as the highest court figures. The Queens are enthroned. Below them come Princes who drive chariots and correspond to the Kings of traditional packs. Corresponding to the Jacks are Princesses, standing. All the pairs of the four elements occur, just as in the Golden Dawn.

The rationale behind Crowley's numeral cards is also taken over intact from his indoctrination in the Order.⁵⁶ All the numeral cards (excluding the Aces) are supposed to take their meanings from the decans. Crowley makes this explicit by inscribing every such card with sigils for the planet and the sign appropriate to the given decan. Though these cards are not illustrated in Waite's fashion, Lady Harris tried to capture their meanings in aesthetic forms: they are abstractly light, heavy, happy, oppressive, etc., depending upon the use of shapes and colours. In *The Book of Thoth*, Crowley also gives his numeral cards to pairs of spirits, those 72 emanations from the Hebrew *Shem ha-MePhoresch* which the Golden Dawn adepts erroneously distributed among the 36 Egyptian decans.

The old Egyptianising of the Tarot now combined with Crowley's vision in Cairo. For the Angel on trump XX Crowley substituted Horus-Harpocrates, a solar god, here presiding over Crowley's new aeon of the True Will. The god appears beneath the maternal sky, Nuit. In Egyptian myth, she daily gives birth to the sun: in Egyptian art, she is represented as arching over the landscape. Crowley imagined Nuit as arched like the Greek letter Omega, the end of the Greek alphabet and therefore symbolic of completion. A close relationship obtains between Crowley's trumps of the Aeon (20) and Lust (11). The numbers on the two cards add to 31, a number which he came to see as significant for the understanding of *Liber Legis*, the book dictated by Aiwaz.

Like Waite, Crowley saw all sacred mysteries as variations on a theme: the testing and transfiguration of the self. The theme emerges from the abortive astrological manual that Crowley was writing in 1915 with Evangeline Adams. In this early work, Crowley described his projected Tarot in more straightforward and helpful terms than those in *The Book of Thoth*. The Thoth Tarot is distinctive for its numerous and obscure subjects and symbols,⁵⁷ ranging from trump 1, with its ancient Egyptian and Greek sculptures, to trump 21, with its 'map of chemical elements'.⁵⁸ Twelve trumps correspond to the zodiacal signs, as set out in Crowley's text, 'The General Principles of Astrology',⁵⁹ from which the subsequent quotations are taken.

The sign of the Ram, Aries, is a fiery sign, ruled by Mars, the fiery planet; the related card is the Emperor.⁶⁰ The Bull, Taurus, is associated with the Tarot Pope; the final version for the card therefore includes a bull.⁶¹ The Twins, Gemini, are found in Crowley's Lovers.⁶² The Crab, Cancer, supposedly finds expression in the triumphant Chariot.⁶³ The Lion, Leo, was extracted from the lion of Fortitude. In 1915 Crowley agreed with the Golden Dawn and called this card 'Strength', a woman muzzling a lion. In the Tarot as finally painted by Lady Harris, the card became Lust, depicted as a nude female riding on a composite beast. The rider is the Whore of Babylon, whom Crowley called Babalon.⁶⁴ The Maiden, Virgo, rather awkwardly corresponds to the Hermit. Crowley disingenuously writes, 'It is only in the modern design that this man is old' owing, he says, to the confused reading of 'hermit' for 'Hermes', allegedly the true identity. Crowley's theory is invalid: in the old Italian references, the figure, bent and bearing an hourglass, is not youthful; it is called 'the Old Man' or 'the Hunchback', never 'the Hermit'.

The sign of the Balances, Libra, equates to Justice in the Golden Dawn scheme. Under this sign, day and night are balanced, equal in duration. In the Scorpion, says Crowley, the sun experiences the death of the year, and the G.D. system provides the Death card here. Crowley originally pictured the card as in the Tarot de Marseille, but later gave the skeleton the crown of Osiris (god of the dead) and submerged the whole scene under water (Scorpio being a watery sign). Sagittarius, the Archer, must be accommodated by Temperance. The Golden Dawn had two alternatives for this trump. Crowley chose the overtly mystical version, 'a woman in

whose girdle shines the Sun'.⁶⁵ In the card by Frieda Harris, some details have been omitted and others added, including an image from the Grail Quest: issuing vertically from the cauldron is a lance or arrow. As a lance, it recalls the vision of Sir Galahad who saw the Lance of Longinus upright in the Holy Grail. As an arrow, the symbol recalls Sagittarius. The Goat, Capricorn, is linked to the Devil trump. 'The Sun has reached his greatest Southern declination.' Crowley's Devil of 1915 was conventional. As the image finally evolved, a goat, equipped with a third eye, stands before a giant phallus that penetrates a ring. The Waterbearer, Aquarius, relates to the Star. Here the original stream of the zodiacal sign coincides by chance with the stream shown in the card. The sign of the Fish, Pisces, is supposedly satisfied by the Moon card. Crowley redesigned it, replacing the crab with an Egyptian scarab beetle, another solar symbol which Crowley calls 'the sun at midnight'. The nocturnal pall symbolises the 'darkness and illusion which characterises woman before she has discovered the purpose of her existence'. This purpose, in Crowley's opinion, is childbirth.

The Golden Dawn's astrological theme for the Tarot includes the planets; yet in Crowley's pack, as in Mathers' and Waite's, the relevant cards are not developed with the same enthusiasm that transforms twelve trumps into the zodiac. Mercury, the Moon and Venus are symbolised in the first three trumps: the Magus (with the cynocephalus ape, sacred to Thoth, the Egyptian Mercury), the High Priestess (with a lunar tiara and the bow and arrows of Diana) and the Empress (replete with the fertility symbols of Venus). It is a virtue of the G.D. correspondences that the Sun aligns with the Sun trump; but Mars (in the Tower), Jupiter (in the Wheel) and Saturn (in the World) remain unacknowledged by any visual content. Crowley's pack makes other use of the planets, notably their zodiacal rulerships and exaltations, so that certain zodiacal trumps contain such references.⁶⁶

Also informative about Crowley's early ruminations on the Tarot trumps is his *Liber CCCXXXIII: the Book of Lies, which is also falsely called Breaks*, initially published in 1913. It has over 90 chapters, each consisting of a single page. In about 1921, Crowley added a commentary for each chapter. The first ten commentaries make references to the first ten Hebrew letters and Tarot trumps, from the Fool (0) to the Hermit (9). Commentaries 15 to 21 obliquely refer to the trumps with corresponding numerals. This mingles two approaches to the numeration of the trumps.

The Fool, followed by the Juggler and onward to the Hermit, receive the Hebrew numbers as conferred by Mathers. The Devil should thereby receive number 16, with the World ending the sequence as 22. In the title of his book, Crowley used the word 'breaks' to mean breaks in concentration. Some such lapse seems to have occurred in the book itself.

Largely unnoticed by previous commentators is the Golden Dawn's use of the Chaldean Oracles. One 'Chaldean' motif is the swarm of bees that decorates Crowley's costumes for his Empress, Emperor, Art (Temperance) and the bride in the Love card. Bees allude to the 'swarm' of ideas that emanate from the 'Paternal Source', i.e. the Creator mentioned in the Chaldean Oracles. For members of the Golden Dawn, the dogs on the Moon card recalled Anubis, an Egyptian god depicted as having the head of a jackal or dog,^{[67](#)} but on Crowley's Moon card, two confronting figures of Anubis, fully developed in Egyptian style, loom over a pair of unattractive dogs, the horrible 'dog-faced demons' in the Chaldean Oracles; G.D. adepts sought protection from them by invoking Anubis, as do followers of the Golden Dawn system today.^{[68](#)}

CHAPTER 10

The Golden Dawn Glimmers On

Waite's second Tarot

By the time he came to write his Introduction to Stenring's translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah* of 1923, A.E. Waite had become wholly disillusioned with the Golden Dawn and its adherents. Speaking of occult interest in the *Sepher Yetzirah*, he wrote, 'in Victorian days, when we heard of Hermetic Orders, Brotherhoods of Luxor and the Veil of Isis, it was apt to be a cloak for every kind of false pretence, not to speak of imbecility of thought'.¹ He says, quite rightly, 'The proper placing of the Tarot Fool is the great crux of every attempt ... to create a correspondence between the Trumps Major and the Hebrew letters'.² Still engaging in mystification, he adds that 'the correct sequence, which emerges from unexpected considerations, has never appeared in print'; Waite had now a secret attribution of his own. In a similar vein, he concluded his article of 1926 on 'The Great Symbols of the Tarot' by proclaiming, 'There is an explanation of the Trumps Major which obtains through the whole series and belongs to the highest order of spiritual truth: it is not occult but mystical; it is not of public communication and belongs to its own Sanctuary. I can say only concerning it that some of the symbols have suffered a pregnant change'.³ But to his remarks in the Introduction to Stenring he puzzlingly added, 'I am not to be included among those who are satisfied that there is a valid correspondence between Hebrew letters and Tarot Trump symbols'.⁴

If there is no such correspondence, there can be no 'correct sequence'; but there can also be no correspondence between the trump cards and the pathways in the Tree of Life, because that is mediated solely by the association of Hebrew letters to the pathways. Waite cannot yet have entertained doubts about this at the time when a diagram of the Tree was being prepared for use in his Fellowship of the Rosy Cross.⁵ This diagram includes Daath, placed centrally between *sephiroth* 2 (Chokmah) and 3 (Binah), but not given a number, the pathways being numbered from XI to

XXXII. The pathway between Chokmah and Binah is thus split into two: one between Chokmah and Daath and one between Daath and Binah. The pathway between the *sephiroth* 1 (Kether) and 6 (Tiphereth) is likewise split in two by the interposition of Daath. To compensate, the pathways from Chokmah and Binah to Tiphereth are suppressed; otherwise, the structure of the Tree is as in Kircher's diagram.⁶ The diagram is plentifully labelled with associations to *sephiroth* and pathways, for instance planets, divine names, archangels and the Jewish angelic orders to the *sephiroth*; but they are also labelled with the grades, from 1° = 10° Zelator to Malkuth upwards. Hebrew letters and Tarot trumps are assigned to the pathways. The result is as follows:

XI	1 (Kether) – 2 (Chokmah)	<i>Aleph</i>	The Fool
XII	1 (Kether) – 3 (Binah)	<i>Beth</i>	The Magician
XIII	1 (Kether) – Daath	<i>Gimel</i>	High Priestess
XIV	2 (Chokmah) – Daath	<i>Daleth</i>	The Empress
XV	3 (Binah) – Daath	<i>He</i>	The Emperor
XVI	2 (Chokmah) – 4 (Chesed)	<i>Vau</i>	The Hierophant
XVII	3 (Binah) – 5 (Geburah)	<i>Zain</i>	The Lovers
XVIII	Daath – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Cheth</i>	The Chariot
XIX	4 (Chesed) – 5 (Geburah)	<i>Teth</i>	Strength
XX	4 (Chesed) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Yod</i>	Hermit
XXI	5 (Geburah) – 6 (Tiphereth)	<i>Kaph</i>	Wheel of Fortune
XXII	4 (Chesed) – 7 (Netzach)	<i>Lamed</i>	Justice
XXIII	5 (Geburah) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Mem</i>	Hanged Man
XXIV	6 (Tiphereth) – 7 (Netzach)	<i>Nun</i>	Death
XXV	6 (Tiphereth) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Samech</i>	Temperance
XXVI	6 (Tiphereth) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Ayin</i>	The Devil
XXVII	7 (Netzach) – 8 (Hod)	<i>Pe</i>	House of God
XXVIII	7 (Netzach) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Tzaddi</i>	The Star
XXIX	8 (Hod) – 9 (Yesod)	<i>Qoph</i>	The Moon
XXX	7 (Netzach) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Resh</i>	The Sun
XXXI	8 (Hod) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Shin</i>	Last Judgement
XXXII	9 (Yesod) – 10 (Malkuth)	<i>Tau</i>	The Universe

The association of letters to trumps remains the same as in the Golden Dawn: the Fool is placed first, and Strength and Justice are interchanged. Despite the introduction of Daath and consequent rearrangement of the pathways, all is still much as in the G.D. tradition.

A set of plates, numbered, outside the designs, 0 and XI to XXXII, contains designs based, sometimes loosely, on the Tarot trumps (see plates 10 and 11). These were in use within the F.R.C., in which they were known as Great Symbols of the Paths. Those numbered 0 and XI are signed Wilfrid Pippet and dated 1923; all the rest are signed JBT and dated 1921 or 1922. JBT is John Brahms Trinick,⁷ from whom Waite commissioned

them between 1919 and 1921; Trinick painted water colours, from which pen-and-ink drawings were made, photo-mechanically reproduced as plates. Evidently Waite had not yet become sceptical about the association between trumps and pathways. The designs are in a very high-flown, exalted style; some diverge very widely from the traditional Tarot images, so that their subjects are hard to identify. Plainly, the designs other than plate 0 were associated with the 22 pathways; the numbers of the plates must correspond to this association. If so, it differed utterly from that on the diagram of the Tree described above; presumably it represents what Waite in 1923 took the 'correct sequence' to be. Furthermore, to assume that plate 0 corresponds to the Fool raises the question of what the additional design, among those numbered from XI to XXXII, can be. But the assumption is dubious. Plate 0 shows, not a Fool, but a bishop celebrating the Eucharist, his mitre inscribed UNITAS, with shadowy ecclesiastical buildings behind him; presumably the Fool is included among the designs labelled XI to XXXII.

Since the numeration of the pathways depends strictly on the assignment of the Hebrew letters to them, we may indicate after the number of each plate the Hebrew letter correlated with the pathway so numbered. Some of the designs can be identified with fair certainty from the traditional features they embody. Plate XIII (*Gimel*) shows a figure with two enormous wings holding a wheel, and must represent the Wheel of Fortune (trump X). Plate XVI (*Vau*) depicts a robed figure holding aloft a triple cross, and standing behind a table on which are four vessels; he is presumably the Magician (I). On plate XVIII (*Cheth*) a diminutive figure with arms outstretched faces a draped female figure wearing the headdress of Isis: she is surely the High Priestess (II). On plate XX (*Yod*) a robed figure holds a lantern level with his eyes: we can recognise in him the Hermit (IX). Plate XXII (*Lamed*), whose border is black instead of white like all the rest, shows a seated bishop in a church and wearing a triple mitre, and must represent the Pope or Hierophant (V). On plate XXV (*Samech*) we see a naked male figure floating above an altar to which are chained a smaller naked man and woman: the chains identify this subject as the Devil (XV). A naked man and woman hold hands on plate XXVI (*Ayin*), with a protecting angel hovering above them: they must be the Lovers (VI). Rather less clear is plate XXVII (*Pe*), on which a winged female figure between pillars labelled Chesed and Geburah pours from

two vessels on to a spring labelled Yesod; perhaps she is Temperance (XIV). Plate XXVIII (*Tzaddi*) is unmistakably the Moon (XVIII): the two dogs and two towers are below a sky in which a crescent moon with female features faces an encircled male head (the sun?). Plate XXIX (*Qoph*) shows a female figure holding a sword and a pair of balances, who must therefore be Justice (XI in the G.D. numeration). On plate XXX (*Resh*) a woman stands by a stream into which she pours from two vessels; seven stars shine above her, and the plate represents the Star (XVII). Plate XXXI (*Shin*) is certainly the Tower (XVI): an immensely tall and narrow tower is being struck by lightning at the top. This is highly appropriate to the letter *Shin*, associated with five in the Cabala. On plate XXXII (*Tau*) a dancing female figure is surrounded by an oval in which appear the four beasts of the Apocalypse: this is unquestionably the Universe (XXI). Plate XXIII (*Mem*) is enigmatic for those with an ordinary knowledge of the Tarot: at the top is the Ark upon the sea, while far below, deep in the sea, and enclosed in the horizontal arm of a swastika, is a crowned figure, seemingly dead, and immensely larger than the Ark. It is the Drowned Giant, equated with the Hanged Man (XII) in Waite's branch of the Golden Dawn.⁸ *Mem* is associated with water in the Cabala.

The usual method of attributing Hebrew letters to the Tarot trumps, followed by Lévi, Papus and the Golden Dawn, was to arrange the trumps in numerical sequence, choosing a place for the Fool, and then correlate them with the letters in parallel alphabetical order; the interchange of Justice and Strength involved only a slight variation on this method. From the foregoing identifications, it is evident that this is not the method underlying Waite's 'second Tarot': almost the only trump subject in a place natural according to it is the World or Universe. The governing principle may perhaps to be to associate each trump with a letter whose corresponding element, planet or constellation is appropriate to the trump subject.

We have only weak conjectures for some of the remaining plates. Plate XIV (*Daleth*) depicts a naked male winged figure with arms upraised, standing on a disc itself winged: the Chariot? XVII (*Zain*) shows a crucifixion: Death (XIII)? XXI (*Kaph*) shows a naked figure lying prone upon the ground, with another naked figure apparently ascending within a five-pointed star: Judgement (XX)? Plate XXIV (*Nun*) shows a robed female figure emblazoned with a hexagram stretching her arms upwards to

another figure standing within a blazing circle and looking kindly down: the Sun (XIX)? The rest of the plates are as follows. Plate XI (*Aleph*) shows a youthful male Christ-like figure, seated upon a pillar, raising his right hand in blessing. Plate XII (*Beth*) shows a serene female figure, similarly seated, her hands on her lap. On plate XV (*He*) a naked woman with a huge pair of wings holds her hands out to her sides. On Plate XIX (*Teth*) a crowned and robed figure ascends to an angel. We cannot identify any of these with any show of plausibility; nor can we fathom the system governing the association of Hebrew letters with trumps. We hope that Mr Gilbert, an acknowledged expert on Waite, will be able to solve the puzzle.

Charles Stansfeld Jones

Charles Robert Stansfeld Jones (no relation to George Cecil Jones) was born in Fulham Park Gardens, London, on 2 April 1886; Aleister Crowley was to remark on his having so narrowly missed being an April Fool.⁹ His father, William John Jones, was an iron merchant and heating engineer. The son ran a tobacconist's shop, but studied to become a chartered accountant. In 1906 he began to investigate spiritualism with an eye to debunking it, but in the process became interested in the occult. On 14 August 1907 he married at a register office Prudence Rubina Wratten, known as Ruby, the daughter of a farmer and then living in Leamington; he had been living in Upper Tooting in south London, but they moved into a flat in Kensington. On Christmas Eve 1909 Jones became a Probationer in Crowley's A.A., adopting the motto 'Vnus in Omnibus' ('One in all things'). From January 1910 onwards he received instructions by post from Crowley's friend J.F.C. Fuller, Frater Per Ardua. In May 1910 Jones left England for Canada, and settled in Vancouver, where he found lodgings and a post as an accountant; his brother also went there. As Frater V.I.O., Jones continued to receive instructions by post from Frater P.A. and dutifully carried out the recommended exercises. On 12 March 1911, he attended a lecture on 'Parsifal', and, having joined Crowley's O.T.O., took the name Parzival as his name in the Order. As Frater Parzival, he founded an Order lodge, called Agapae Camp, later Agapé Lodge, in Vancouver, said to have been the first regular O.T.O. lodge in North America.¹⁰ For this he was awarded the degree VII° in 1915.

On 26 February 1913 Jones received a letter advancing him to the grade of Neophyte in the A.A.; this letter prophesied that he would attain that of

Master of the Temple, the lowest of the Third Order grades. He adopted a new magical name, Frater Achad ('Brother One'). Despite his alienation from Crowley in 1911, Frater P.A. had continued to send instructions to Frater V.I.O. in distant Vancouver. Crowley did not grasp the situation until March 1913. When he did, he insisted that Jones forsake Fuller or suffer expulsion. Jones complied, and began to receive guidance directly from Crowley. In that year, he gave up his lodgings in Vancouver, perhaps owing to lack of money, and went to live, with his wife Ruby, in a small tent near the ocean, with the consequence that he had to walk several miles each day to work and had to meditate outside in the rain. In the course of the year, a baby was born to the couple: man, wife and baby all lived in the tent. – As for Fuller, he did not entirely forsake mystical studies.¹¹ He continued in the army but published *Yoga: a Study of the Mystical Philosophy of the Brahmins and Buddhists* (London, 1925).

While in America during the First World War, Crowley travelled through the USA and Canada. In October 1915 he went to Vancouver to visit the enthusiastic Frater V.I.O., who aspired to the grade of $8^{\circ} = 3^{\circ}$ Master of the Temple which had been Crowley's own since 1909. To advance to this, the first of the three highest grades, it was necessary to take the Oath of the Abyss, undertaking to interpret all phenomena as a direct dealing of God with his soul; the Abyss was that separating the Third Order from the other two. Under the A.A. system any member of the Neophyte grade or higher had the prerogative of taking the Oath without first advancing through the intermediate grades. According to the later doctrine, this made him a 'Babe of the Abyss'. Only if he then 'annihilated the personality' would he attain the grade of Master of the Temple; otherwise he would become a 'Black Brother'.¹² At the summer solstice of 1916, Jones experienced what he called a 'Great Initiation' – not, he explained, one of the 'Lodge Room' kind, but 'one directed entirely by the Masters of Wisdom from other Planes of Being'. This illumination, which dealt with the *sephiroth*, showed him that he was destined to fulfil Aiwaz's prophecy that he would discover the key to *Liber Legis*. He took the Oath of the Abyss, and understood his initiation as advancing him to the $8^{\circ} = 3^{\circ}$ grade; Crowley, in New York, received a telegram from Jones announcing his attainment of that grade. Jones's new motto was 'Unus in Omnibus, Omnia in Uno' ('One in All, All in One') – V.I.O.O.I.V.; but for the most part he continued to use the name 'Achad'. In a revelatory flash, Crowley saw him as the

successor whom Aiwaz had prophesied in *Liber Legis* (*The Book of the Law*) in the words 'but one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all ... It shall be his child, and that strangely'; Crowley took the word 'one' as a sly allusion to Brother One. Nine months before, he had unsuccessfully attempted to fulfil the prophecy by begetting a child upon the current Scarlet Woman, Jeanne Foster (Soror Hilarion). Now he had acquired a magical son.

Crowley decided that there had been an oracle in Frater Achad's name in the O.T.O., Parzival. The Percival of Arthurian legend was the innocent fool. The Fool in the Golden Dawn Tarot receives the letter *Aleph*, which, used as a numeral, means 'one', and that translates as Achad. Crowley should thus be Parzival's father, Kamuret. The relationship was confirmed for Crowley when he found that numerology could reduce 'Kamuret' to '666', one of Crowley's favourite labels for himself. From his cottage in New Hampshire, Crowley, now a Magus 90 = 20, with the name To Mega Therion (the Great Beast), composed in 1916 an epistle to his 'son'.¹³

Achad then gave up his job as an accountant, and, at least for the time being, left his wife Ruby and their child in order to concentrate on magical work; he, and (one hopes) they, appear to have been supported by a branch of the O.T.O. and perhaps also by Achad's giving lessons in magic.¹⁴ In 1917 he reversed his motto to O.I.V.V.I.O. At the winter solstice of that year, he received a continuation of his Great Initiation, this time dealing with the 22 pathways on the Tree of Life. In March 1918 he sold all his possessions and moved to New York,¹⁵ in order to work with Crowley. In the summer they journeyed together to an island in the Hudson River to undertake astral communication with the wizard Amalantrah; back in New York in the autumn, they planned publication of a new volume of *The Equinox*.¹⁶ In October Achad was finally enabled to discover the key, based on the Cabala, for interpreting *Liber Legis*. This key was the number 31.

Early in 1919 Achad moved to Detroit, from where *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. I, was published. It included Achad's magical diary from 1909 to 1913; the title given it by Crowley, 'A Master of the Temple', indicated that he accepted as authentic Achad's attainment of that grade. The publication of *The Equinox* had been meant to be financed by the sale of Boleskine House, but it did not fetch enough for the intended September number to appear. Achad expounded his key to *Liber Legis* in a book,

Liber 31, which he sent to Crowley in September. Crowley was flattered by his adulation and acknowledged that he had discovered the true key for understanding the *Book of the Law*, which he renamed *Liber AL*;¹⁷ the numerological value of the letters A and L was 31 when converted into Hebrew *Aleph* (1) and *Lamed* (30). He wrote for Achad's benefit a book, *Liber Aleph*, whose title is a pun on One, Achad and Unus; this was not published until Crowley's death. Achad was made Cancellarius of the A.A. in or before 1919.¹⁸ In the autumn of that year, shortly before his return to England, Crowley travelled to Detroit to visit Achad; he did not see his magical son again.

In 1921 Theodor Reuss, Outer Head of the O.T.O., appointed Jones its Grand Master for North America.¹⁹ In 1922, using 'Fratr Achad' as his pen-name, as he did in all his writings, Jones published in Chicago *Q.B.L. or the Bride's Reception*, described as a short Qabalistic treatise on the nature and use of the Tree of Life, which is, the author claims, a plan 'by which we may express every idea in the Universe'. The book was designed to expound Crowley's theory of the Tree of Life. In a late chapter, Achad states that the spring equinox of 1904 was the Equinox of the Gods, inaugurating a new aeon, and tells of Crowley's reception of *Liber AL vel Legis*, from which Achad subsequently quotes extensively, including the passage saying that *Tzaddi* is not the Star; but in the preceding text, the standard G.D. attribution is used, with *Aleph* attributed to the Fool, and Strength and Justice exchanged in the numbering, but with *Tzaddi* still attributed to the Star. The court cards are understood as by the G.D.: the mounted figures named Knights are the true Kings, those named Kings are Princes in chariots, and those named Pages are in truth Princesses.

Achad observes that the Waite-Smith Tarot is the only one easy to obtain, but thinks some of its designs inferior to the 'old' ones (those of the Tarot de Marseille) and others to Lévi's. Thus the Fool should be an old rather than a young man; the old design of the Lovers correctly shows a man between a virgin and a harlot, with Cupid above them; the pentagram on the Devil's forehead should not be reversed; and the old design of the Sun, with two children embracing, is preferable to Waite's card with Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child.

Although Achad's initial intention had been to conform to Crowley's teaching, *Q.B.L.* became the first expression of his increasing heterodoxy, as viewed from a Crowleyan standpoint. On p. 48 he suddenly announced

that at that stage in writing the book he had been rewarded with a whole new conception of the Tree of Life. He then continued with the original plan of the book, but devoted a lengthy appendix to notes written as he developed his new conception. He did not question the structure of the Tree, with the pathways arranged within it, as the Golden Dawn, and Crowley following it, had adopted it from Kircher's diagram. Nor did he question the G.D.'s attribution of Hebrew letters to the Tarot trumps. He wanted, rather, to re-assign the Hebrew letters, and, with them, the Tarot trumps, to the 22 pathways as the latter are disposed in the Kircherian diagram of the Tree; this of course would involve renumbering the pathways to accord with the new assignment of Hebrew letters to them. He wrote, 'The Qabalists tell us that the SEPHIROTH were emanated by means of the FLAMING SWORD, or LIGHTNING FLASH, which descended from Kether unto Malkuth ... They also say that this was followed by the ASCENT of the SERPENT of WISDOM who thus formed the PATHS ... One may now question how it was that the SERPENT who formed the Paths by ASCENDING The Tree, could possibly have started at the Top' (Appendix, pp. 5, 7). The argument appears reasonable, for the assignment of the Hebrew letters to the pathways inherited by Crowley from the G.D. indeed started at the top (*Aleph* to 1-2, *Beth* to 1-3 and so on down to *Tau* to 9-10). Achad's idea was to reverse this direction. In his Appendix, he proposed the following order for the first fourteen pathways, and hence to the trumps from the Fool, followed by the Magician, to Death:

11	Malkuth(10) – Yesod(9)	<i>Aleph</i>	the Fool (0)
12	Malkuth(10) – Hod(8)	<i>Beth</i>	the Magician (I)
13	Yesod(9) – Hod(8)	<i>Gimel</i>	High Priestess (II)
14	Malkuth(10) – Netzach(7)	<i>Daleth</i>	Empress (III)
15	Yesod(9) – Netzach(7)	<i>He</i>	Emperor (IV)
16	Hod(8) – Netzach (7)	<i>Vau</i>	Hierophant (V)
17	Hod(8) – Tiphereth(6)	<i>Zain</i>	Lovers (VI)
18	Yesod(9) – Tiphereth(6)	<i>Cheth</i>	Chariot (VII)
19	Netzach(7) – Tiphereth(6)	<i>Teth</i>	Strength (VIII G.D.)
20	Hod(8) – Geburah(5)	<i>Yod</i>	Hermit (IX)
21	Tiphereth(6) – Geburah(5)	<i>Kaph</i>	Wheel of Fortune (X)
22	Netzach(7) – Chesed(4)	<i>Lamed</i>	Justice (XI G.D.)
23	Tiphereth(6) – Chesed(4)	<i>Mem</i>	Hanged Man (XII)
24	Geburah(5) – Chesed(4)	<i>Nun</i>	Death (XIII)

It is not difficult to imagine how this sequence might continue, but Achad merely wrote, 'PAST THIS VEIL I do not feel permitted to lead you at this

time'. Achad accepted the G.D. assignments of elements, planets and zodiacal constellations to the Hebrew letters, with one exception: he proposed to assign Mars to *Kaph* and Jupiter to *Pe* instead of the other way round, as had been standard in the G.D. tradition. The Appendix now proceeds with a plethora of numerological and astrological ideas for revising the foregoing sequence. The new basic principle was to place the three mother letters on the three pathways comprising the central pillar of the tree: *Aleph*, as before, on 10-9, *Mem* on 9-6 and *Shin* on 6-1; but a complex series of changes and adjustments fails to resolve the matter completely.

Achad finalised and elaborated his theory in the book he published in 1923, *The Egyptian Revival, or the Ever-Coming Son in the Light of the Tarot*. The cover was adorned with the diagram of the Tree, more legibly printed at the end of the book, showing Achad's finally revised order of the pathways. This was as follows. (The underlining shows the central pillar.)

11	<u>Malkuth(10) – Yesod(9)</u>	<i>Aleph</i>	the Fool (0)
12	Malkuth(10) – Hod(8)	<i>Beth</i>	the Magician (I)
13	Yesod(9) – Hod(8)	<i>Gimel</i>	High Priestess (II)
14	Malkuth(10) – Netzach(7)	<i>Daleth</i>	Empress (III)
15	Tiphereth(6) – Geburah(5)	<i>He</i>	Emperor (IV)
16	Hod(8) – Netzach(7)	<i>Vau</i>	Hierophant (V)
17	Hod(8) – Tiphereth(6)	<i>Zain</i>	Lovers (VI)
18	Yesod(9) – Netzach(7)	<i>Cheth</i>	Chariot (VII)
19	Netzach(7) – Tiphereth(6)	<i>Teth</i>	Strength (VIII G.D.)
20	Hod(8) – Geburah(5)	<i>Yod</i>	Hermit (IX)
21	Chokmah(2) – Kether(1)	<i>Kaph</i>	Wheel of Fortune (X)
22	Netzach(7) – Chesed(4)	<i>Lamed</i>	Justice (XI G.D.)
23	<u>Yesod(9) – Tiphereth(6)</u>	<i>Mem</i>	Hanged Man (XII)
24	Geburah(5) – Chesed(4)	<i>Nun</i>	Death (XIII)
25	Chesed(4) – Chokmah(2)	<i>Samech</i>	Temperance (XIV)
26	Tiphereth(6) – Binah(3)	<i>Ayin</i>	the Devil (XV)
27	Geburah(5) – Binah(3)	<i>Pe</i>	Blasted Tower (XVI)
28	Binah(3) – Chokmah(2)	<i>Tzaddi</i>	the Star (XVII)
29	Tiphereth(6) – Chesed(4)	<i>Qoph</i>	the Moon (XVIII)
30	Tiphereth(6) – Chokmah(2)	<i>Resh</i>	the Sun (XIX)
31	<u>Tiphereth(6) – Kether(1)</u>	<i>Shin</i>	the Judgement (XX)
32	Binah(3) – Kether(1)	<i>Tau</i>	Universe (XXI)

Achad restored the assignment of Jupiter to *Kaph* and of Mars to *Pe*.

This tampering with the G.D. tradition perturbed Crowley, who, in his diary for 9 August 1923, referred to Achad's 'absurd new attributions proposed for the Paths';²⁰ but Achad continued to refer to him, tacitly or by magical motto, in a tone of deep respect, and indeed prefaced *The Egyptian Revival* with part of a poem attributed to 'Saint Edward Aleister

Crowley'. The book begins by referring to the public interest in the tomb of Tutankhamen, discovered in the previous year, and expounds, with fantastic details, Achad's theory that the father-in-law of Tutankhamen, Akhnaten (written by Achad Khu-en-Aten), was the reviver of a more ancient tradition that worshipped a mother and son, Nuit and Horus, without the father Amen-Ra. The revised association of Hebrew letters with the 22 pathways is then justified in the light of the Tarot trumps, and a whole cosmic doctrine is set forth. We learn that space and time are illusions; that Horus, or Ra-Hoor-Khuit, the Conquering Child, the Ever-Coming Son, is the Lord of the present Aeon; and that the new Aeon, that of the Foundation of the Kingdom upon Earth, began in 1900, when Horus entered Aquarius.²¹

A story is in circulation that, in the words of Gerald Suster, Achad went mad, 'wandered the streets of Vancouver wearing nothing but a raincoat and flashed passers-by in the belief that he was dispelling "the veils of illusion" '.²² According to Kenneth Grant, however, this was a task imposed upon Achad by Crowley as part of his magical training. In 1923 and 1924 Frater Achad, under that name, contributed two articles to the *Occult Review*.²³ He was in Chicago in 1924-5, and from there dated the Preface to his next book, *The Anatomy of the Body of God*, published there in 1925. He continued to be obsessed by the Tree of Life, and in the book he explained how, just after he had finished writing *The Egyptian Revival*, he had a vision on 14 April 1923 in which 'the "Tree" began to GROW, and proved itself, to my mind, to be the veritable anatomy of Ra-Hoor-Khuit'. The book concerns itself with the correct geometry of the Tree, in which he holds that all angles must be multiples of 30° and which he interprets as revealing the intelligence manifested in the order of the universe.

In August 1925, Crowley, still recognising Achad as his 'beloved son', wrote him a letter of stern rebuke, and blamed himself for having acquiesced in Achad's giving up his work as an accountant, calling it 'an absolute breach' of A.A. regulations to accept money in return for occult teaching. In the following year, a serious quarrel occurred between them. Crowley had left some books in storage in Detroit, and asked Achad to return them. Certain of the books could not be found; Crowley unjustly accused Achad of having stolen them, causing him the deepest offence.²⁴ There was no further contact between the two men for some ten years. In

1928, Achad returned to England; there he joined the Catholic Church,²⁵ making his first communion at the Christmas Midnight Mass that year, and being confirmed in the following year. He must have returned to British Columbia in 1929 or 1930. He wrote, many years later, of four ordeals through which he passed: the first in 1932, with the 'arising of the Silver Star'; the second in 1933, with the 'arising of the Golden Star'; and the third in 1935, with the 'formulation of the Nine-fold Diamond'.²⁶ After the second of these, Achad began to believe that the Aeon of Horus was already due soon to come to an end, to be succeeded by the Aeon of Maat or Ma, the Egyptian goddess of justice and cosmic order, prophesied by Crowley in 1912.²⁷ In July 1936, Crowley started writing to Achad once more, criticising his latest theories;²⁸ but the rapprochement was shortlived. In September 1936, Jones wrote an attack on *Liber AL vel Legis*, which he attempted to publish under a pseudonym in the *Occult Review*. In his capacity as Grand Master of the O.T.O. for North America, he also tried to close down the Agapé Grand Lodge which a former disciple of his, Wilfred Talbot Smith, had founded in Pasadena, California. This prompted Crowley to expel Achad from the O.T.O., though not, apparently, from the A.A.²⁹

Aleister Crowley died of chronic bronchitis and heart failure on 1 December 1947; in Ellic Howe's felicitous phrase, 'a child of the Golden Dawn but certainly not its favourite son'.³⁰ His friend Lady Harris (1877-1962) was present at his deathbed, and arranged his funeral at Brighton, including a reading of one of his poems, 'Ode to Pan'. The order of the service was provided in a pamphlet illustrated by her. Crowley's remains were cremated and preserved in an urn which was kept at the home of Karl Germer, Crowley's successor in the O.T.O. The urn was then lost or stolen.³¹

After her husband's death in 1952, Lady Harris spent the last ten years of her life in India, and died quite poor. Other friends of Crowley also survived him but had long been alienated from him. Gerald Kelly had received a knighthood, become President of the Royal Academy and been inducted into the Legion of Honour. He was celebrated as a portrait painter and lived a long life (1879-1972). His sister Rose had overcome her alcoholism and remarried. George Cecil Jones had settled into a conventional life with his wife and children. He died in 1951. His old

friend, J.C.F. Fuller, retired from the army in 1933, having attained the rank of Major-General. He became famous for his many writings on strategic warfare and military history; he was a friend and supporter of Oswald Mosley, the leader of the British Fascists. His memoirs deal with his army service and are silent about his friendship with Aleister Crowley and membership in the A.A.; he died in 1966. By that time, Aleister Crowley was being resurrected in popular legend.

From 16 July to 4 August 1945 – ‘two days *before* the first announcement of the dropping of an Atomic bomb on Hiroshima’, as he later wrote – Achad experienced his fourth ordeal, involving ‘ultimate sparks of the intimate fire’; this is an extreme case of interpreting all events as God's dealings with one's own soul. On his birthday, 2 April 1948, at 11 minutes past 1 p.m., he proclaimed at Deep Cove, British Columbia, that the Aeon of Truth and Justice had finally dawned.^{[32](#)} In a letter to Gerald Yorke and his disciple Albert Handel, Achad distinguished between this and the Aeon of Ma, which began on 14 April at 1.06 p.m.^{[33](#)} He then founded a Fellowship of Ma-Ion to promote his belief in the new era: this appears to have survived in Canada and the United States until the 1970s.^{[34](#)} Frater Achad was among those of Crowley's friends, long alienated from him, who survived him: he died in 1950 in Vancouver at the age of 64. His major writings are still in print, and he is revered in the O.T.O.

Israel Regardie

Israel Regardie was born Israel Regudie in London of poor Orthodox Jewish immigrant parents on 17 November 1907; in the First World War his brother's name was incorrectly spelled when he joined the Army, and the family adopted that form.^{[35](#)} In 1921 the whole family emigrated to Washington, D.C.; Israel studied at art school in Philadelphia, where he read the writings of Mme Blavatsky and, eventually, Crowley's *Book Four*, which greatly impressed him. He wrote to Crowley, who put him in touch with Karl Germer in New York. In 1928 Crowley offered Regardie a post in Paris as his secretary. Regardie lied to his father, saying that he was going to study art in Paris; to obtain a visa, he forged a letter from his father. He then travelled to Paris and became part of Crowley's household.

There he met Gerald Yorke, another disciple, and Crowley's current Scarlet Woman, a Pole named Miroslava.

To Regardie's disappointment, Crowley taught him no magic, but simply treated him as a secretary. On the other hand, he did give him successful instruction in social behaviour, as exemplified by Regardie's first dinner with him. As he later described it, the dinner was served with formality; then, as the cognac was brought, 'Crowley pounced on Miroslava and they fell down on the floor and started fucking like a pair of animals right there in front of me. Today that wouldn't bother me one jot, but then ... I was so amazed, I think I just staggered out of the room.'³⁶ Only a short time later, Regardie was forced to break the news to Crowley that Miroslava had left him. She was quickly replaced as Scarlet Woman by Maria Teresa Ferrari de Miramar. Regardie was ordered to visit prostitutes so as to lose his virginity: not normally one of the duties of a secretary.

When, at the instance of Regardie's sister, the French authorities expelled Crowley and his entourage in March 1929, Regardie was at first denied entry to Britain, despite having been born there, and went instead to Brussels with Maria, who proceeded to seduce him. He was eventually admitted in November, along with Maria, whom Crowley had married for the purpose, and they both went to join Crowley. But Regardie parted company from Crowley, who could no longer afford his services.³⁷

In 1932 Regardie published two books, *A Garden of Pomegranates*, which treated of the Cabala, and *The Tree of Life*, dealing with the techniques of ritual magic, both in accordance with G.D. theories, learned from Crowley, but with hardly anything peculiar to his ideas. This new betrayal of secret G.D. doctrines caused a furore in the A.O., now led by Langford Garstin and Maiya Tranchell-Hayes. Crowley had of course betrayed them long before, but only in sources unlikely to reach the general public. Langford Garstin took it upon himself to write to Regardie forbidding him to mention the Golden Dawn in print again: never can a prohibition have been less effective.

In 1934, Regardie joined the Stella Matutina, adopting the motto 'Ad Majorem Adonai Gloriam'.³⁸ He was of course already familiar with G.D. rituals and teaching, and advanced rapidly through the grades, attaining that of 5o = 6o Zelator Adeptus Minor. He did not remain a member for long, however; in 1936 he published *My Rosicrucian Adventure*, in which he inveighed against the degeneracy of the Order and the incompetence of

those who ran it. He had read Yeats's pamphlet of 1901, and strongly agreed with him about the evil of secret groups within an Order. He agreed, though with reservations, about the importance of the examination system, but bitterly criticised his colleagues in the Stella Matutina for caring more about the grades they attained than about their progress in magic. He also made some criticisms of Crowley, and declared his total opposition to the view of Dion Fortune that the central aim of magic was to search on the astral plane for Masters.³⁹

Regardie returned to the USA in 1937. From 1937 to 1940 he published *The Golden Dawn* in four volumes, setting out all the G.D. rituals and all the G.D. manuals of instruction that he had in his possession, which is to say most of them.⁴⁰ These volumes became a marvellous source for all aspiring magicians who lacked a contact with any of the Orders descended from the G.D.; but, for members of the Stella Matutina and the A.O., their publication was the final, deepest betrayal. 'Within a year or two' of the publication of the first volume, Francis King says, 'both organisations became dormant'.⁴¹ Regardie then for many years abandoned all overt connection with magic.

In 1937 Crowley and Regardie had exchanged letters which became increasingly ill-tempered. Soon after Regardie's return to the USA, Crowley retaliated for his criticisms by circulating a scurrilous document defaming Regardie, the refrain of which is 'betrayed, robbed and insulted': 'Regudy betrayed, robbed and insulted his benefactor [Crowley] ... He betrayed, robbed and insulted his benefactress [Dion Fortune] ... He was thus able to betray, rob and insult his benefactress [an unnamed lady, perhaps Hope Hughes]'. Regardie was deeply offended. He rejected further involvement with Crowley and, for many years, with occultists in general. Instead, he took up the study and practice of psychotherapy according to the teachings of Wilhelm Reich, inventor of the orgone box.

Regardie moved from New York to Los Angeles in 1947, the year that Crowley died. In 1970 he wrote a study of Crowley's career up to 1914, *The Eye in the Triangle: an Interpretation of Aleister Crowley*, in which he partially revised his hostile view of Crowley; this led to his carrying out several re-editions of Crowley's works. He also wrote some books on practical magic, and sponsored the design by an artist, Robert Wang, of a Tarot pack resembling those used in the Golden Dawn; this was published in 1978 under the title 'the Golden Dawn Tarot'.⁴² By 1980 Regardie had

become a grand old man of occultism, and patronised a number of people anxious to engage in magical work, such as Major Grady Louis McMurtry of Berkeley, California, whom he helped to revive the O.T.O.⁴³ In 1977 a Golden Dawn Temple was set up in Columbus, Georgia. The members, prominent among whom was Chic Cicero, contacted Regardie in 1980; he visited them and consecrated a Vault of the Adepti for them. In 1981 he retired to Sedona, Arizona; a lady whom he instructed in magic established a G.D. Temple in Los Angeles, and in 1982, at Columbus, Regardie initiated some members of both Temples into the 5^o = 6^o grade, thus establishing a Second Order. Members of the Los Angeles group consulted Regardie about a new Tarot pack inspired by the Golden Dawn and more faithful, in their eyes, to Mathers' ideas. It was eventually published in 1991, after Regardie's death, as the New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot: it contained two versions of the Temperance card, as conforming with the requirements of the G.D. Portal rite.⁴⁴ In 1984 Regardie brought out *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*; he died of a heart attack in 1985.

It is due to Regardie's work, and above all to his publication of *The Golden Dawn*, that the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn achieved a resurrection long after its first demise. Carroll R. Runyon, Jr., formerly an official of the Isis-Osiris Temple (provisional) of the Order, which was active in Pasadena from 1980 to 1986, states that 'there are more people practicing the Golden Dawn system of magick today [1997] than there were in the 19th century'.⁴⁵ This is almost certainly true. The apostolic succession may have been broken, but what now count are the magical doctrines, the magical techniques and the initiation rituals. The need no longer exists to trace their origins to the remote past: it is sufficient that they come down from the Order created by Westcott and Mathers.

Dion Fortune

According to Tanya Luhrmann,⁴⁶ Dion Fortune, in antecedents and character virtually the antithesis of Israel Regardie, was 'one of the most influential twentieth-century magicians', from whose group at least five present-day magical fraternities now active in Britain are descended. 'Dion Fortune' was the pen-name of Violet Mary Firth, adapted from her magical motto 'Deo non Fortuna' ('By God, not by chance'), in turn

borrowed from the heraldic motto of her family. She was born near Llandudno on 6 December 1890, the daughter of a member of a well-known Yorkshire steel manufacturing family who ran a hydropathic hotel.⁴⁷ After a nervous breakdown at the age of 20, due to a psychological assault on her by an employer, she began in 1913 to practise as a lay Freudian analyst. Her first contact with the occult occurred when she attended a meeting of the Theosophical Society in 1914; inclined originally to scoff, she was impressed by a convincing exercise of telepathy.

The practice first of psychoanalysis and then of magic displays an unconventional temperament; yet Dion Fortune was in most respects very much of her class. In an England not yet ashamed of its class-consciousness, she was unmistakably 'a lady', and had most of the attitudes you would expect an English lady of the time to have. She was highly patriotic and a great believer in the British Empire; she had a strict code of sexual ethics, by which she abided, being revolted by the practice of homosexuality and disapproving both of extra-marital and premarital sexual relations. From her books it is evident that she had a strong vein of common sense; she was no theorist, but capable of lucid, well arranged exposition, as her *The Mystical Qabalah* of 1935 shows. But she was what is described in almost all accounts of her as a 'psychic'. What this means is that she had a quite exceptionally strong power of visualisation, indeed of sensory imagination in general; but she entertained no doubts that, in exercising it, she was perceiving objective realities on a different plane. She used this sensory imagination to compose novels with magical themes; but she felt no suspicion that the experiences she underwent when she was not creating fictions might be as subjective as the fictions themselves. It was the encounters on the astral plane that for her constituted the practice of magic, and it was to that practice that she devoted her life.

The war came, and Dion Fortune joined the Women's Land Army. The salient doctrine of the Theosophical Society was that of the Himalayan Masters, human beings raised to a supernatural state who were supposed to watch over the evolution of humanity, and who could be contacted spiritually and would guide the pupil's steps. In 1914 Fortune accepted this idea, indeed became obsessed with seeking to contact the Masters; and of course she succeeded. She had a dream in which, on a Himalayan plateau,

she beheld the Master Jesus. With him was the Master R., identified with the comte de Saint-Germain, and also with Francis Bacon, Christian Rosenkreutz and other notables; but it was the Master Jesus who was to guide her. She did not take the Theosophist view that the Master Jesus was merely one who had allowed 'the Christ Force' to enter his body; she believed that he was himself a Christ, sent to give a particular teaching to mankind, though only one of several such.⁴⁸ Dion Fortune claimed in print that she did not have to learn occultism (although she read many occultist books). In the three days after her vision of the two Masters, she recovered the memory of her past incarnations, back to her initiation in Atlantis, and with it, the memory of all she had learned during those lives. Plato would have been extremely pleased.

Thus, in the Women's Land Army, Dion Fortune had suddenly become a full-fledged occultist. She was still open to instruction, however; when the war ended and she left the Women's Land Army, she attached herself to a magician called Dr Theodore Moriarty, who died in 1923 and about whom, under the disguise of Dr Taverner, she wrote short stories. Moriarty taught that Melchisedec, priest and king of Salem,⁴⁹ had come to Earth from Venus, bringing with him wheat, the honey-bee and asbestos. Dion Fortune accepted this theory, and continued to accept it all her life. In 1919 she joined the A.O. Temple under the authority of Brodie-Innes, which was being run by Maiya Curtis-Webb, whom she had known since childhood. Subsequently, she transferred to the other A.O. Temple, run by Moina Mathers. In the winter of 1923 Dion made a visit to Glastonbury in the company of her friend Charles Thomas Loveday (1874-1948),⁵⁰ and there contacted three Secret Chiefs in a dream: Socrates, Lord Erskine (1749-1823), whom she took to have been a reincarnation of St Thomas More, and David Carstairs, killed at the infamous battle of Ypres.⁵¹ In 1924 she published her book *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage*; Mrs Mathers was suspicious of her good faith in writing this book, but Dion managed to allay her qualms. In the same year she bought the Chalice Orchard at Glastonbury; this was to be a favourite place of hers. There in that year the Masters dictated to her a work published as a book in 1927, *The Cosmic Doctrine*.

Also in 1924 she received instructions from the Secret Chiefs to join the Theosophical Society, which she did. As we have seen, Dion Fortune accepted the idea of hidden Masters who could be contacted on the astral

plane; contacting the Masters became for her the central activity of a magician. What she principally objected to in the Society was its Eastward stance: although she believed in reincarnation, she wanted a magic in the pure Western tradition, uncluttered by Sanskrit terminology and Hindu concepts.

Having joined the Theosophical Society, Dion Fortune, still under the guidance of the Master Jesus, became a member, and subsequently the President, of its Christian Mystic Lodge, founded a year or two previously to interpret Theosophy and Christianity in terms of each other. Moina Mathers, to whom Fortune represented the Lodge as a means of winning recruits to the A.O. from members of the Society, was in accord with her actions, and indeed the A.O. did receive some new members by this means.

The year 1927 was an eventful one for Dion Fortune. She met and married Dr Thomas Penry Evans (1892-1959), known to his friends as 'Merl'. Having become highly critical of how the T.S. was run, she expressed such criticisms in print; the resulting controversy led to her resigning from it and from its Lodge, and, also in 1927, founding her own Community (later Society and then Fraternity) of the Inner Light. She was also suspended from the A.O. by Moina Mathers for her articles in the *Occult Review* for 1927-8, later collected in her book *Sane Occultism* (1929). Eventually Moina Mathers actually expelled her from the Order.⁵² On Dion's own account, this was for having the wrong aura; Edward Langford Garstin, a leading member of the A.O., thought it was due to what Moina Mathers judged to be the unorthodoxy of the draft of *The Cosmic Doctrine* shown to her by Dion and Loveday.

Dion Fortune proceeded to join the Hermes Temple of the Stella Matutina, run by Hope Hughes.⁵³ This maintained friendly relations with the Community of the Inner Light. In 1930 Dion introduced an innovation: correspondence courses for the preliminary stages of the Inner Light instruction. After the preliminary stage, members were initiated into the 'Outer Mysteries', equivalent to the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn, and later, into the 'Inner Mysteries'. For the ceremonies, the G.D. rituals were used with little change. A hostel was built at the Chalice Orchard, which was used as a kind of retreat for members of the Inner Light.

Great emphasis was placed in the Inner Light on the importance of contacting a Master. In the original Golden Dawn, contact with the Secret

Chiefs was not the concern of the ordinary members, but only of the three visible Chiefs; Mathers came to claim that only he had ever made such contact. But the belief in the Secret Chiefs and the possibility of contacting them was important to all the members: it was through such contact that the Order received its instructions and, in part, its authority. This is why, after the break with Mathers, Felkin had become obsessed with re-establishing the contact; earlier, groups such as Florence Farr's 'Sphere', unsuccessfully opposed by Annie Horniman and W.B. Yeats, had engaged in similar practices. Although Dion Fortune's insistence that everyone should contact and be guided by a Master thus cannot be said to have been a pure importation of alien ideas, it completely altered the emphasis, in the practice of magic, from that which it had had in the original Golden Dawn.

There was, however, an aftermath to Dion Fortune's expulsion from the A.O. In a celebrated published account, she described a magical attack from an unnamed opponent, evidently Moina Mathers.⁵⁴ She was first persecuted by demonic cats, which she succeeded in exorcising. Subsequently she encountered her enemy on an astral journey, barring her way: in the course of a battle she was defeated, and, coming out of her trance, discovered that she had been in violent convulsions. In a second attempt, she overcame her enemy, who did not trouble her again; but she later discovered her back scarred by scratches as if from a gigantic cat. In September 1929 a friend and fellow-member of the A.O., Miss Netta Fornario, was found lying dead in a lonely place on the island of Iona: she was naked save for a cross around her neck, and her body was covered in scratches.⁵⁵ Dion Fortune did not hesitate to accuse Moina Mathers of her psychic murder.

It is difficult to be clear about the temporal relations between these events. Whether Moina Mathers was still among the living when Dion Fortune was undergoing persecution by cats and battles on the astral plane, is uncertain. But Moina Mathers certainly died in 1928, so if she did murder Miss Fornario, she did so from beyond the grave.

Dion Fortune's reaction to the publication of Regardie's two books in 1932 was the reverse of that of Garstin and Maiya Tranchell-Hayes. She reviewed them both in 1933, in the course of an article in the *Occult Review*.⁵⁶ She also mentioned several of Crowley's works, including the recently published *Magick* (a new version of *Book Four*).⁵⁷ She gave

unstinted praise to Regardie's books, but had a more divided opinion about Crowley: 'Although Crowley's writings are marred by the grossest ribaldry and the foulest personal abuse, they are works of a man of genius and a writer of magnificent English.' She commended both Crowley and Regardie for disregarding their oaths of secrecy and revealing the G.D. system of magic; she believed that actual rituals and magical techniques should still be kept secret, along with membership lists and meeting-places, but attacked the tradition of concealing occult *doctrine*, saying that 'there is no legitimate reason that I have ever been able to see for keeping these things secret'.⁵⁸ She made similar remarks about both writers in one of her books,⁵⁹ saying that the *Tree of Life* was the best book on magic ever published. She went on to raise doubts about Crowley's instructions in *Magick*, objecting that his practical methods risk calling up the *Qliphoth* (evil spirits); but she commended his 'insight into the philosophy of occultism'. Welcome it or deplore it, the day of occult secrecy was over, as Dion Fortune said in 'Ceremonial Magic Unveiled': an era had now definitively ended.

The married life of Merl Evans and Dion Fortune was tempestuous. While continuing his medical practice, he entered fully into her magical activities; but he weaned her from her attachment to the Master Jesus in favour of the pagan gods, and the Christian ingredient of the Inner Light became ever more attenuated. This distressed Loveday, and at his instance the Guild of the Master Jesus was established as a group within the Fraternity. Meanwhile, Dion Fortune composed her book *The Mystical Qabalah*, published serially in her journal *The Inner Light* and in book form in 1935. This is lucid though quite unoriginal and without pretensions to scholarship: it simply expounds the Mathers theory of the Cabala. It contains many mentions of the suit cards of the Tarot (the trumps are not alluded to). The book contributes nothing to the theory of the Tarot, and no emphasis is laid on it: Tarot cards are referred to just as signs of the zodiac are referred to. By this date, no particular enthusiasm had to be felt for the Tarot for it to be taken for granted as an accepted component of a magician's world.

Dion Fortune spent much of the period from 1935 to 1939 writing magical romances. She had become extremely fat, and her marriage increasingly shaky. In 1939 Merl left her and sought a divorce, which she did not oppose; he married again and abandoned the practice of magic.

Dion's magic entered a new phase, through contacts with King Arthur, Merlin and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Master Jesus presiding over the trio. With the help of these powers, she attempted to assist the war effort on the astral plane. She died of leukaemia in January 1946.

PART IV

TAROTISM TRAVELS EASTWARD

CHAPTER 11

Switzerland

The idea persists that Tarot cards originated in ancient Egypt. No facts support this theory, while many refute it, as we have emphasised. If the cards had spread from a location on the Nile, we would expect to find not only some traces of them there, but also of their supposed migration to Italy, which boasts the oldest surviving Tarot packs and the oldest references to the game of Tarot. Furthermore, the genesis of the Tarot among Egyptians would have made likely its diffusion among the nations nearby; and if cards in the region had really embodied a Hermetic doctrine, they would surely have been duly preserved by esoterists, who were plentiful in Muslim cultures. Similar observations apply to a Cabalistic Tarot: it would have been carried to Palestine by Cabalists who fled there from Spain in 1492. In actuality they never possessed an esoteric Tarot. The entire Middle East, along with Greece and countries to the north, had to wait until the XX century to learn about Tarotism.

Tarotism arose in XVIII-century France, a setting in which Egyptomania was fashionable. That fad was the source of the Egyptian ideas and subjects that were attached to the Tarot, an Italian import formerly used for humble game playing, devoid of esoterism. When these facts are acknowledged, the migration of Tarotism becomes sensible and clear. It proceeded westward from France to England, where the Golden Dawn adapted Éliphas Lévi's interpretations and uses for the cards. Through the writings of Lévi and of Papus, the ideas of the French school spread eastward. Their books contained illustrations that were especially influential: Lévi had made his own sketches for the Chariot (pulled by Egyptian sphinxes), the Devil (which Lévi interpreted as the Egyptian 'Goat of Mendes') and the Wheel of Fortune (with Egyptian gods – Hermanubis ascending, and Typhon descending); Papus was not an artist, but his *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (Paris, 1889) includes trumps drawn by a young artist named Wirth.

Oswald Wirth

Oswald Wirth (1860-1943) was of Alsatian parentage. His father, Joseph Paul Édouard Wirth, fought in the abortive insurrection of 1848, and was wounded and imprisoned. Upon his release, he feared police surveillance, so he and his wife Pauline (née Moreux) moved abroad. They settled in Brienz, on the shore of Lake Brienz, in Switzerland. There, Joseph Paul Oswald Wirth was born on 5 August 1860. His siblings were Édouard and Elise. Their father supported the family by painting studies of local fauna and landscapes. Although he was not religious, Wirth senior admired the strength of his wife's faith; she was the only Roman Catholic then living in Brienz. She instructed her children in Christianity, albeit of a liberal and ecumenical blend. She was unhappy that the village had no Catholic school, and Oswald was sent to board at a small seminary in Sarnen, between Brienz and Lucerne. At the age of 13, he encountered a book on curative Mesmerism and successfully “magnetised” a classmate who complained of a mosquito bite. Young Wirth refrained from further cures, but remembered the process. Three years later, he transferred to the Catholic college of Saint-Michel at Fribourg. There too he found incidental opportunities to learn about Mesmerism. However, he was not so amenable to the required studies in theology; and his contentiousness led to his dismissal. He returned to Brienz, and assisted his father with his painting. Pauline Wirth died in 1878, and the same year brought some sort of crisis, probably financial. In 1879 Oswald went to London where he could earn a better income as an accountant.

Oswald Wirth was unsuited for book-keeping, and he frequently escaped to the student district of Paris. He became acquainted with Theosophy, but did not find it attractive. He readily joined the *Société magnétique de France*, under the leadership of Baron Dupotet, and is said to have met Adolphe Didier, a noted Mesmerist. In these circles, Wirth heard about Freemasonry and inquired about admission. In 1882 he joined the 106th Infantry, stationed at Châlons. By early 1884, he had entered the local Masonic lodge, *La Bienfaisance châlonnaise*, whose mission was primarily philanthropic. Beyond this, Wirth became especially interested in the symbolism of the fraternity's initiation rites and ceremonial regalia. He advanced quickly, attaining the rank of Master in 1885. The Grand-Orient, overseeing all French Masonry, undertook reviews of its rituals, and solicited suggestions from members. Wirth's lodge directed him to

compile its report. He recommended emphasising traditional and devotional symbolism, such as 'The Grand Architect of the Universe'. The compilation was the first of Wirth's many Masonic essays and booklets.¹

When Wirth returned to civilian life in 1886, he shuttled between Châlons and Paris. He rejected work in accounting, and chose Mesmeric healing instead. He began to study the occult tradition, which he supposed would enrich his understanding of Mesmer's techniques. A dramatic episode occurred in 1887 when Wirth was applying hypnosis to a patient: during her trance, she reportedly made a detailed forecast about his personal life. An aristocrat, a man with blond hair and blue eyes, would send Wirth an invitation to meet; the two men would be congenial and compatible. These predictions were fulfilled when Wirth received a letter from the marquis Stanislas de Guaita (1861-97). De Guaita had been born and raised at the Château d'Alteville, in the village of Tarquimpol in Lorraine. He studied at Nancy. His consuming interest was high magic, and he revered Éliphas Lévi. The young marquis accumulated a library of 1,653 rare volumes.² He was close friends with Paul Adam (1862-1920), Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) and Matgioi (Albert de Pourvoirville, 1861-1939). Occultists at Châlons praised their new acquaintance, Oswald Wirth, in letters to de Guaita in Paris. De Guaita hired Wirth as a personal secretary, and he also became a friend and confidant.

At the end of May 1888, de Guaita created the Ordre Kabbalistique de la Rose-Croix (Cabalistic Order of the Rose-Cross). Wirth was probably one of its founder members.³ De Guaita, aware of Wirth's artistic skill, suggested that he draw a Tarot, restoring its ancient symbolism – or in other words, accommodating Lévi's notions. Wirth accepted the charge, and his work produced two results in 1889. He issued a set of cards through the printer Poiriel, who was also an occultist.⁴ The edition was limited to 350 packs, under the title *Les 22 Arcanes du Tarot Kabbalistique*, 'designed by Oswald Wirth for the use of initiates, following the indications of Stanislas de Guaita', according to the subtitle.⁵ The linework was reproduced by 'heliogravure', with colours applied by stencil. Wirth's Tarot adheres closely to the old designs of the Tarot de Marseille, retaining the standard subjects in their mediaeval costumes. Several details are obedient to Lévi. *Le Bateleur* faces a table strewn with four implements like the Tarot's suit-signs (the Cup, with its blood-red contents, presumably alludes to the Holy Grail). *La Papesse*

wears a crescent atop her tiara. *L'Impératrice*, reminiscent of the maternal figure in the Apocalypse, extends a pair of wings and rests her foot on a crescent. *L'Empereur* sits on the Masonic cube. *Le Chariot* follows sphinxes rather than horses. *La Roue de Fortune* supports Egyptomane monsters. *Le Diable* exhibits alchemical terms, SOLVE and COAGULA, inscribed on his arms; he wears the sigil of Mercury as a fig leaf.⁶ At the bottom of each card is its French name, with an Arabic numeral on the left and a Hebrew letter on the right – again following Lévi. Trump XVI is called *le Feu du Ciel* (the Fire of Heaven), and trump XIII, usually unnamed, is *la Mort* (Death). *Le Fou* (the Fool) has the penultimate letter, *Shin*, but no number. The vagabond wears a motley costume; his shorts are dragged down by the claws and fangs of a lynx. A furtive crocodile comes from Paul Christian's fantasy. The Fool has a dark complexion, as does the Popess. According to a legend in occult circles, Wirth's self-portrait, projected forward to his old age, appears in Arcanum IX, *l'Ermite*.⁷ Wirth added some other details: the figure holds a cane with seven conjoined segments, perhaps indicating bamboo; a serpent coils behind the cane.

Wirth's drawings, without colour, also appeared in Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. There, Wirth's 'restored' Arcana stand beside the Tarot de Marseille trumps.⁸ The latter, at their upper right corners, have acquired Hebrew letters to accommodate Papus' plan. The Fool (labelled *Shin*) is positioned alphabetically between Judgement (*Resh*) and the World (*Tau*). Yet the World is still labelled 21.

Chapter XVI of *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* presents Wirth's 'Essay on the Astronomical Tarot'. It refers to Paul Christian's story about the Arcana having been displayed in an Egyptian hall of initiation. Wirth gives their disposition on opposing walls.

	—————West East—————		
North	Juggler, 2, 3, 4, 5,	Lovers, 7, 8, 9, 10,	Fortitude
South	Fool, 21, 20, 19, 18,	Stars, 16, 15, 14, 13,	Hanged Man
	—————West East—————		

Papus apparently failed to convince Wirth about the placement of the Fool, despite Wirth's compliance in marking the card with the letter *Shin*. By the same token, Papus says nothing in support of Wirth's theories. For Wirth, the four quaternities (grouped above by numbers) have obvious themes: intellectual activity at the north-west, moral activity at the northeast, intellectual passivity at the south-west, moral passivity at the south-east.

Transitional states are symbolised by the remaining images (denoted above in words translated from Wirth's French). He lightly declares that 'We think that enough has been said to enable each student to discover for himself the complex signification of every arcanum in the Tarot.'⁹

Wirth proceeds to coordinate the Arcana with stars visible in the northern hemisphere. He allots twelve trumps to the constellations in the zodiac. Only two pairs of correspondences agree with those that Papus gives in the same book. Wirth allots his remaining trumps to circumpolar stars: closest to the axis are the Fool (as Cepheus), the World (as Polaris), Death (as Draco) and the Chariot (as Ursa Major). This last may rely on Danish or Icelandic traditions that identify Ursa Major as the 'Smaller Chariot' and the 'Little Wagon'.¹⁰ Cepheus, a mythical king of Ethiopia, was married to Cassiopeia, who also was installed as a constellation. Wirth finds her in the Popess. Now we see why the Fool and the Popess have dark skin in Wirth's stencilled pack. Gone from Wirth's astronomical system are the planets required by the Cabalism of Lévi and Papus.

Although Wirth and Papus probably conferred in compiling *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, the two were not friends. Wirth wrote that he 'had a horror of Papus';¹¹ but they coexisted peacefully, perhaps out of respect for Stanislas de Guaita. *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* briefly cites *Le Serpent de la Genèse*: this book of de Guaita's was still incomplete in 1889, but he published excerpts in advance.¹²

On 21 October 1889 Wirth addressed the International Congress on Human Magnetism. He urged his listeners to pursue Mesmerism for its therapeutic value, not for idle entertainment or curiosity. Even scientific research should proceed only under strict ethical constraints, he argued. Wirth was of course seeking to safeguard the patients of Mesmerists, but by 1895, he had come to believe that the Mesmerists themselves were at risk. In that year, his legs were afflicted with partial paralysis, which he attributed to his Mesmeric exertions, although it did not deter his interest in healing. He wrote *L'Imposition des mains et la médecine philosophale* (*The Laying-on of Hands and Philosophical Medicine*, Paris, 1897).

In 1897 de Guaita, then only 36 years old, died of a drug overdose and Barlet assumed leadership of the Cabalistic Order of the Rose-Cross. In one unexpected stroke, Wirth had lost his most cherished companion and his most enjoyable work. Friends found him a position as a librarian in the government's Colonial Office. He embraced occultism – where it

reinforced Freemasonry. Beginning in 1911, he published a series of articles on Masonry and the Tarot.¹³ He still viewed the trumps as ‘active’ (1-11) and ‘passive’ (12-21, followed by the Fool as 0). A pair of illustrations divides the cards into the two themes (see plates 2 and 3). Wirth has not greatly revised his old designs, although Justice here wears a blindfold. On 28 March 1912 he hosted a conference, sponsored by the Alliance Spirituelle, on the themes of ‘Freemasonry, Initiation and Spiritualism’. He bravely addressed the anti-Catholics in the audience; he condemned those Freemasons whose membership was motivated only by enmity. He stressed that the spirituality of Freemasonry was independent of religious denominations. He insisted that the fraternity had originally had spiritual goals, not political ones; and that the latter should be disdained. He sought global unity for the movement; but when World War I erupted such an ambition became more difficult to realise. The war also inflicted further loss on Wirth: his brother, a career soldier, was killed in combat in 1914.

After the war, Wirth issued substantial publications, beginning with *Les Signes du zodiaque, leur symbolisme initiatique* (*The Signs of the Zodiac, Their Initiatory Symbolism*, Paris, 1921), *Le Serpent vert* (*The Green Serpent*, Paris, 1922)¹⁴ and *L'Idéal initiatique* (*The Initiatory Ideal*, Paris, 1924). In 1926, he redesigned the Arcana in 22 *Planches* (Plates), actually a portfolio of eleven leaves, each with two cards. They essentially agree with his first efforts, nearly 40 years earlier. In the 1926 renderings, Wirth added a few exotic touches, such as the *T'ai-chi tu* (Yin-Yang disc) ornamenting the book cover displayed by the Popess. Arcanum 16 now is *la Maison Dieu* (God's House). The thirteenth card here has no identifying compartment at the bottom; but the number 13 and the letter *Mem* are at the top. Compared with Wirth's stencilled Tarot, his new Arcana are brighter, and the colours somewhat differently disposed. The Popess and the Fool both have pale skin. Wirth has added ornate borders, uniquely designed for each card. Some of these borders camouflage an abstract symbol relevant to the adjacent image. They are printed in shiny gold, as are the backgrounds for all the figures.

Wirth next published *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge* (*The Tarot of the Mediaeval Artists*, Paris, 1927). In his Tarot essay of 1889, Wirth had accepted Paul Christian's false claim that 22 Arcana were disposed on the walls of a chamber beneath the Egyptian pyramids. However, in a section

entitled 'The Pretended Book of Thoth', Wirth now ridicules Christian's fantasy. He rightly observes that archaeology has found no trace of an Egyptian Tarot, nor even a Gnostic or alchemical Tarot. Wirth repudiated Christian's myth, but continued to meditate on the Arcana in the symmetrical groupings that the myth had led him to perceive.

Wirth presents the Arcana in his usual pair of parallel rows. However, the old quaternities yield slightly new interpretations. Arcana 2-5 symbolise 'active theory' (study), Arcana 7-10 'active practice' (practical application), Arcana 13-16 'passive theory' (intuition), Arcana 18-21 'passive practice' (destiny). The remaining Arcana are again viewed as 'transitional' between their respective neighbours; these transitions are given more attention than in the 1889 essay.

Wirth observes that the Fool card can be left unnumbered. Should it be placed prior to Arcanum 1 or after 21? He obviates the problem by arranging all the images in a circle with the Fool situated between 1 and 21. The circle stands with the Stars at the nadir, the Lovers at the zenith. The Arcana below the horizon are 'passive'; those above are 'active'.

Another diagram effectively combines the circular array with that of the confronting rows and their quaternities. Using the circle of Arcana, Wirth pairs them by lines parallel to the horizontal diameter, and again by lines perpendicular to it; both relationships then combine to form additional foursomes. Wirth elsewhere groups the Arcana as polarities, ternaries, septenaries and decads. They variously satisfy the doctrines of Cabalism, alchemy and Freemasonry. He also adheres to his old theory of astronomical imagery; the association of trumps with constellations remains as before.

Among Wirth's 1927 illustrations are 'ideograms', derived from Western myth and magic. Wirth uses them as succinct representations of the Tarot Arcana.¹⁵ These ideograms are precisely the abstract symbols that he had embedded in the borders of his Plates of the previous year. In some copies of the 1927 book, the 1926 Plates are bound inside the back cover. In the body of the book, the trumps appear in economical linework, usually from the drawings that underlie Wirth's Plates, but quite bereft of the baroque borders. Certain trumps are completely different in drawing and in format.¹⁶ At one point, Wirth's imagery contradicts his discussion.¹⁷ Still more of his drawings decorate his text. These show his familiarity with

significant artefacts, such as the oldest copper-engraved prints and one of the oldest illuminated Tarots.¹⁸

Before his retirement from the Colonial Office in 1927, Wirth completed cataloguing its library.¹⁹ He had only a government pension for financial support during the Great Depression. He lived with his sister, Elise. According to Jean Baylot, Wirth in 1930 published a pseudonymous article that evaluated the beliefs of occultists. Its structure imitated that used by Lévi and de Guaita: the themes parallel the subjects in the Tarot Arcana. Wirth ambiguously concluded that occultists' credulity may be excused if it leads them to initiation in authentic mysteries.²⁰

In the following year, he radically condensed his earlier Tarot book as *Introduction à l'étude du tarot (Introduction to the Study of the Tarot*, Paris, 1931).²¹

He again presents the Tarot trumps in his circular array. He had noted certain foursomes symmetrically balanced on the vertical axis (formed by the Lovers and the Stars), but now his themes are more clearly defined.

Ways of knowing:	active – Juggler (intelligence), Strength (reason) passive – Fool (impulse), Hanged Man (obedience)
The unknown:	active – Popess (mystery), Wheel (resistance to chance) passive – World (sensation), Death (impotence)
The intelligible:	active – Empress (thought), Hermit (wisdom) passive – Judgement (inspiration), Temperance (life)
The realised:	active – Emperor (power), Justice (organisation), passive – Sun (redemption), Devil (instinct)
Religion:	active – Pope (self mastery), Chariot (generosity) passive – Moon (superstition), Tower (false worship).

Wirth has fallen silent about the northern constellations and about the Cabala.

The Supreme Council of French Freemasons now discovered that Wirth, for all his prominence, had not progressed beyond the fourth degree of the Scottish Rite. In an exceptional gesture, the Council awarded Wirth with an advanced degree. Perhaps in an effort to bring closure to another aspect of his past, Wirth published *Stanislas de Guaita, souvenirs de son secrétaire (Stanislas de Guaita, memories of his secretary*, Paris) in 1935.

At the outbreak of World War II, Wirth was on holiday in the Ardennes with his sister and niece. They fled, first to Monterre-sur-Blourde, south of

Poitiers, and then to Vienne, south of Lyons. They sheltered at the homes of esoterists who knew Wirth by his reputation. He relinquished to others the directorship of *Le Symbolisme*, the journal for a Masonic publishing house that had featured his works since 1912. At the invitation of Swiss Masons, he wrote for their journal, *Alpina*. Their adulation, however, did not induce him to return to his homeland, and he died at Vienne in 1943. Elise wrote to their friends, 'Your old Master left us on March 9 at 11 o'clock, gently, without a tremor, as befits the Sage of the ninth Arcanum.'²²

An anonymous artist, working in a blueprint medium, copied Wirth's drawings from *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, and supplemented them with the four common suits.²³ These are redrawn from the Tarot de Marseille, and are stylistically compatible with the trumps. Each of the suit cards bears a Hebrew letter, but this feature does not derive from Lévi, Papus or Wirth. All the cards in this pack are numbered as a continuous series: the suits are ordered as *Bâtons*, *Coupes*, *Épées*, *Deniers*; within the suits, the order is *Roi*, *Reine*, *Chevalier*, *Valet*, Ace, 2 ... 10. This series, numbering 1-78, essentially follows a scheme published by Paul Christian.²⁴

Wirth's 1926 Plates were faithfully copied in turn, with the same dimensions and colours as the originals, and even including Wirth's monogram in its original position. However, the copyist eliminated the ornate borders and their embedded ideograms. A title card credits Wirth and his *Planches*, and gives the copyist's name as Georg Alexander, working at Küsnacht-Zurich, in 1960.²⁵ Alexander's Tarot now has its own progeny.²⁶

Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge was eventually reprinted by Claude Tchou (Paris, 1966). In the new edition, many of Wirth's illustrations have been redrawn. In the text the trumps again appear in black and white, but in a pseudo-woodcut style, much more mechanical than Wirth's draughtsmanship. They are labelled in 'Gothic' typeface, within upper compartments which have Roman numerals, and within lower compartments which have French names and Hebrew letters. The Fool has no numeral. Arcanum XIII altogether lacks a lower compartment, and has no name or letter. There are no fancy borders, only slender frame lines, rounded at the corners. Inside the back cover of the book, a pocket contains the 22 Arcana as a pack of cards. The drawings are as in the text, but bright colours have been added, along with coppery backgrounds.²⁷ On

the basis of Wirth's 1926 Plates, we may suppose that he wished his cards to look like mediaeval illuminations, with intense hues against metallic gold. He would have been disappointed by fake woodcuts against fake copper.^{[28](#)} Today, the pack (with improved colour) can be acquired without the book,^{[29](#)} and the book (in an English translation) without the pack.^{[30](#)}

The Tchou reprint of *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge* contains a final page, not written by Wirth.^{[31](#)} This page, a fold-out chart, contrasts the astrological correspondences that a dozen authors have found in the Tarot. One of them is 'Fomalhaut', actually Charles Nicoulland (1854-1925), the French astrologer who wrote *Manuel d'astrologie sphérique et judiciaire* (*Manual of Spherical and Judicial Astrology*, Vignot, 1897). The following system appears under his name.

Planetary trumps

I	II	III	IV	V	IX	XII	XIII	XV	XVII
Sun	Moon	Earth	Jupiter	Mercury	Neptune	Uranus	Saturn	Mars	Venus

Zodiacal trumps

VI	VII	VIII	X	XI	XIV	XVI	XVIII	XIX	XX	XXI	Fool
Virgo	Sagittarius	Libra	Capricorn	Leo	Aquarius	Aries	Cancer	Gemini	Pisces	Taurus	Scorpio

These correspondences are appealing because the combination of 10 planets and 12 signs nicely fulfills the desired quantity of 22. Of course, Uranus and Neptune were unknown to those who produced the first Tarot, whether they were ancient priests, mediaeval Cabalists or Renaissance humanists. Nevertheless, these same correspondences are given in Eudes Picard's *Manuel synthétique et pratique du Tarot* (Paris, 1909). His work, blended with that of Papus and of Élie Alta, is the basis for the Tarot article in M.C. Poinso's *The Encyclopedia of the Occult Sciences* (New York, 1939). And this is the source cited by Migene González-Wippler for [Chapter 18](#), 'Divination', in her book *The Complete Book of Spells, Ceremonies and Magic* (New York, 1978).

Elisabeth Haich

Elisabeth Haich (1897-1994) lived in Switzerland for the second half of her life. She was born in Budapest and was raised and married in Hungary. She pursued a career in the fine arts. Her only child, a son, joined the Hungarian army during the Second World War. When Budapest was bombed by the advancing Russians and the retreating Germans, the Haich family separated and fled to safety. Elisabeth remained in Hungary and

began conducting seminars on yoga. She was discouraged from this by the Communist régime, and accordingly transferred to Switzerland. She founded several ashrams with Selvarajan Yesudian; they also collaborated on a number of books on yoga.

Writing in German, Elisabeth Haich published *Tarot* (Stuttgart, 1969).³² She was neither a magician nor even an occultist. Her book on the Tarot does not advocate the use of Tarot cards to predict the future, nor Tarot readings for any other purpose. She does not describe how to lay out the cards; the only remark that may be taken as a reference to the practice is her declaration that it is not mere chance that governs the way someone shuffles the cards, cuts them or lays them out. She does not urge the reader to join any occult group or engage in any magical practices. She simply expounds her mystical interpretations of the greater Arcana, one by one. According to her, their purpose is the acquisition of self-knowledge; and, as she proclaims on the last page of the book, knowledge of the Self is KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. The restraint is far from complete, however. Like occultist writers, she treats writing about the Tarot as a license to make wild historical misstatements, assigning an immense antiquity to the cards as well imposing her own interpretations on the cards in defiance of any logical assumptions to be made about their original symbolism; she readily imputes mistakes to the traditional cardmakers, but cites no historical evidence to justify her charges.

The author begins by complaining of the many new Tarot packs designed by people unaware of the symbolic significance of the cards, who thus falsify their inner meaning. She claims that Tarot cards were created by initiates of prehistoric times, and declares that it is impossible to find a period in history when the greater Arcana were not known: there is Babylonian, Egyptian, Judaic, Mexican, Indian and Chinese evidence for the existence of these cards, she maintains. The Tarot was kept intact by the Jews as it was integral to the Cabala (Elisabeth Haich adhered firmly to Tarot 'Cabalism' inaugurated by Éliphas Lévi). The Gypsies still use Tarot cards for Fortune-telling, she remarks; they are unlikely to have derived them from the Jews, but more probably from the Egyptians. She later explains that Moses received the images of the greater Arcana from the Egyptians, and handed them on as religious treasures to his people. She does not explain why this remarkable transmission goes unmentioned in the Pentateuch.

Of the lesser Arcana, Elisabeth Haich merely says, quite falsely, that in each suit the Ace outranks all the other cards.³³ She regards the suits of Rods, Swords, Coins and Cups as corresponding, in that order, to the elements of fire, air, water and earth. Thereafter she devotes all her attention to the greater Arcana. She acknowledges Oswald Wirth as the artist who originally conceived the set of greater Arcana supplied with the book. This reproduces his 1926 designs, albeit lacking the heavy borders with his 'ideograms'.³⁴ Her text further diverges from Wirth, as she numbers the Fool 21 and the World 22. She states in a footnote that the numbering of the World as 21 was an error on the part of the artist. Haich also claims that the French names given to the cards are sometimes misleading, and pronounces that of Arcanum 14 simply wrong. She herself names the cards as follows.

1	the Magician	12	the Hanged Man
2	the High Priestess	13	Death
3	the Queen	14	Balance
4	the King	15	the Devil
5	the High Priest	16	the Lightning-Struck Tower
6	the Parting of the Ways	17	the Stars
7	the Chariot	18	the Moon
8	Justice	19	the Sun
9	the Hermit	20	Judgement
10	the Wheel of Fortune	21	the Fool
11	Power	22	the World

In her commentary, Elisabeth Haich explains that the 22 greater Arcana represent the 22 different levels of consciousness. She likes to identify the figures on different cards: thus the Queen of Heaven is shown, with a change of costume, not only on Arcanum 2, but on Arcana 8, 11, 14, 17 and 22 as well. Likewise both the man shown on Arcanum 6 and the Hanged Man are the magician depicted on Arcanum 1, while the boy and girl shown below the Sun on Arcanum 19 have formerly been seen as enslaved to the Devil on Arcanum 15, but are now redeemed. She associates the first ten Arcana with the ten *sephiroth*. On Arcanum 6, she sees an 'angel', not Cupid, despite his archery. She notes that on Arcanum 16 the lightning issues from the sun, rather than from a thundercloud. She takes the black animal on Arcanum 18 to be a wolf rather than a dog. She describes Arcanum 20 as showing a naked man and woman half buried in the ground and looking on admiringly as a man rises from his grave. She

says of the Fool that his consciousness has united with the divine; he is oblivious of the animal that bites him.

Unsurprisingly, Elisabeth Haich's commentary contains a good deal of discussion of Hindu ideas. Her conception of the cards, along with that of Wirth, owes much to the ideas of the occultists, but only to those of Lévi and his followers in France. Elisabeth Haich and Oswald Wirth enjoyed long and active lives. They must have been privately aware of the growing diversity in Tarotism. In their public pronouncements, however, they did not bother to contend with conflicting opinions about the Tarot, neither those of occultists nor those of card historians.

CHAPTER 12

Germany

The theories of Court de Gébelin concerning the Tarot were retailed to German players of the game as early as 1782, the year after their first publication in the eighth volume of his *Monde primitif*.¹ The anonymous author began by remarking that many of his readers will often have played Tarock, without its ever having occurred to them that the cards are nothing but allegorical pictures, and went on to expound Court de Gébelin's theories. In 1783, Etteilla's disciple Hisler, who carried on a professional fortune-telling practice in Berlin, published at Leipzig a German translation of Etteilla's *Cours théorique et pratique du livre de Thot*, with copper-engraved illustrations of all the cards of Etteilla's original version of the Tarot pack.² It was reissued at Stuttgart in 1857: Etteilla's cards were again reproduced, but in a wood-engraved version; readers were invited to cut them out and paste them on to cardboard.³

After the First World War, there was in Germany a minor outbreak of interest in magic and the occult, in part stimulated by the novels of Gustav Meyrink (1868-1932), especially *Der Golem* (1915), whose title refers to the Jewish legend of an artificial human being created, not, like Frankenstein's monster, by scientific, but by magical means.⁴ The new German magical current led to a more widespread awareness in that country of the divinatory and occultist Tarot. The game of Tarot, called in German Tarock, had indeed been familiar in Germany for about 250 years, although its popularity was waning; but since the beginning of the XIX century, it had been played exclusively with French-suited cards, and the trumps had lost the original images, which had been replaced by animals or genre scenes. The German disseminators of the occult Tarot did not use the German word 'Tarock', but instead the French form 'Tarot'.

The first book to be devoted to the subject by a German author was *Der Tarot: die kabbalistische Methode der Zukunfterforschung als Schlüssel zum Okkultismus* (*The Tarot: the Cabbalistic Method of Enquiry into the*

Future as the Key to Occultism), published in Leipzig in 1920; a second edition, which was an exact reprint of the first, appeared in 1925. Its author was Ernst Tristan Kurtzahn, who gave on the title page and in all references to himself both his real name Ernst Kurtzahn and the magical name Daityanus he had adopted, and who dedicated the book to Meyrink. Kurtzahn also wrote a booklet about the Rosicrucians, and a book about runes; in the nationalistic atmosphere of the period, runes were of great interest to those with occultist leanings, as being an ancient secret alphabet of authentically German origin (in a wide sense of 'German').

The publisher of Kurtzahn's book on the Tarot was Dr Richard Hümmel, from whose press came other occultist works, including a journal called *Magische Blätter*; Hümmel had had the idea of writing a book on the Tarot himself, Kurtzahn tells us. In his Preface, dated from Hamburg, Kurtzahn explains that he had first become interested in the Tarot by the references to it in [Chapter X](#) 'Light' of *Der Golem*; he had then, with no success, searched German occult literature for information about it, which he subsequently found only in books written in French. He was plainly quite unaware of any writings on the subject in English, although he was familiar with the pack executed under the aegis of A.E. Waite. He describes this as the Tarot of Pamela Colman Smith, never mentioning Waite; in one place he gives credit for it also to Dr Wynn Westcott.

The book is divided into two Parts, theoretical and practical. In the first (theoretical) Part, [Chapter 1](#) is devoted to the history of the Tarot. It is far older than Éliphas Lévi believed, Kurtzahn asserts. Lévi traced it to ancient Egypt; he overlooked the fact that Egypt was a colony of Atlantis; the Tarot is accordingly 21,000 years old.

The long [Chapter 2](#) expounds an interpretation of the Tarot based on the Cabala; although the order of exposition differs, it is lifted with scarcely any variation from Papus's *Tarot des Bohémiens*. Many correspondences are given between the cards and the four Hebrew letters of the Divine Name. Without mentioning Papus, Kurtzahn repeats his observation that the numbers 4, 7 and 10 can all be made to correspond to 1 by first taking the sum of the whole numbers from 1 to the given number (4, 7 or 10) and then repeatedly adding the digits of the resulting number; e.g. $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 = 28$, $2 + 8 = 10$, $1 + 0 = 1$. Like Papus, Kurtzahn takes the numbers as running in cycles: first 1, 2, 3, 4; then 4, 5, 6, 7; finally 7, 8, 9, 10. The fourth term of each cycle, corresponding to the second *He* of the

Divine Name, and being also the first term of the next cycle, is transitional, just as Papus had taught. Kurtzahn associates the major Arcana with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in accordance with Lévi's system, making trump 1 correspond to *Aleph* and so on, with the Fool, corresponding to *Shin*, inserted between Judgement (*Resh*) and the World (*Tau*).

Part II is devoted to the 'Practical Tarot'; the first chapter lists a number of different Tarot packs, including that devised by Etteilla and known in Germany since the middle of the XIX century as 'das Buch Thot'. [Chapter 2](#) sets out the preparations for a Tarot reading: the reader must wash, if possible in running water, and abstain for three days beforehand from meat and alcohol. [Chapter 3](#) explains ten spreads or layouts, one devised by Kurtzahn himself. [Chapter 4](#) sets out the cartomantic significances of the cards.

At the end of the first edition of the book are uncoloured designs for all 78 cards, which could be cut out, pasted on card and coloured by the reader, but Kurtzahn refers at the end of his Preface to a complete Tarot pack issued by the publisher for practical use, which clearly embodied the same designs (see plate 4). France, England and Bohemia, Kurtzahn says, have long had Tarots of their own: this is the very first *German* Tarot. (He evidently did not count, or did not know about, the Italian-suited Tarots used by German players up to the XVIII century.)

The principal design for each card of Kurtzahn's Tarot is enclosed in a rectangle; for the trump cards, court cards and Aces, this rectangle has a panel at the bottom in which is written, in German, the name of the card. The designs are almost all borrowed from Etteilla's Tarot (Grand Etteilla I). Kurtzahn does not follow Etteilla's practice of numbering all 78 cards consecutively, however; nor does he observe Etteilla's altered order for the the major Arcana, but numbers them in their Tarot de Marseille order (save for the insertion of the Fool as last but one). He gives almost all of their names as in the Tarot de Marseille, though in German. Trump 1 is called 'the Juggler' (*der Gaukler*), trump 2 'the High Priestess', but trump 5 'the Pope'; trump 6 is called 'the Lovers', trump 16 'the Tower struck by Lightning' and trump 17 'the Stars'. A Roman numeral in a circle above the rectangle gives the number of each trump; the Fool is numbered 0 and the World XXII. From left to right below the rectangle on each trump card are the corresponding Hebrew letter in a circle, the name of the letter in

Roman script and the numerical value of the letter in a circle (e.g. 20 for *Caph*); there are no other inscriptions. For the Juggler (I) Kurtzahn uses Etteilla's card 15, which indeed corresponded to it; for the High Priestess (II) he borrows Etteilla's design 12 for Prudence; for the Pope (V) he uses Etteilla's Marriage card 13, which corresponded to the Lovers. Kurtzahn's Empress (trump III) combines attributes of Oswald Wirth's Empress and of Etteilla's card 11 (*la Force*, Strength) while his Emperor (trump IV) has the posture of Etteilla's King of Cups, while holding the sceptre and orb of Pamela Colman Smith's Emperor. Kurtzahn draws on the Tarot de Marseille for the Lovers (VI) and the Hanged Man (XII): on trump VI, Cupid aims his arrow downwards at a youth who stands between two women; the Hanged Man is suspended by the foot from a gallows with two uprights and a crossbar, but his head bears the halo that appeared in Pamela Colman Smith's version. The suits are named Staffs (*Stäbe*), Goblets (*Pokale*), Swords (*Schwerter*) and Coins (*Münzen*); he has them, very reasonably, correspond respectively to Clubs, Hearts, Spades and Diamonds, or to the German suits Acorns, Hearts, Leaves and Bells. In other places he uses the alternative name *Degen* for the Swords suit, and Sceptres (*Szepter*), Chalices (*Kelche*) and Pentacles (*Pentakel*) for the other three. The court figures are named King (*König*), Queen (*Königin*), Knight (*Ritter*) and Page (*Knappe*). The suit cards are uniformly copied from Etteilla's Tarot, save that they lack all inscriptions except the names of the court cards and the Aces and, on each numeral card from 2 to 10, an Arabic numeral, not encircled, above the rectangle, to give the value of the card.⁵

The next contribution was a book by Woldemar, Graf (Count) von Uxkull-Gyllenband, who wrote under the name Woldemar von Uxkull. This eccentric nobleman was a student of classical antiquity, but hardly a scholar; he was deeply imbued with occultist ideas, which informed his fantasies. A typical production was his *Die eleusinischen Mysterien: eine Rekonstruktion* (Berlin, 1927). As the title indicates, he attempts a fanciful reconstruction of the Eleusinian mysteries; but the book has a Preface by Alfred Unger, in praise of Freemasonry, which is followed by an essay of Uxkull's on 'The Essence of Initiations in Antiquity'. Such initiations, he tells us, were supersensible and supernatural, undergone in trance. The initiate could not question the existence of another hidden reality, nor the survival of the personality after the death of the body: he had experienced

the one and conversed with the other. Uxkull goes on to inform the reader that a man has four parts: his body, his life, his spiritual body and his ego. The life is not a mere function: it is a substance (*Stoff*). The spiritual body holds the individual personality; and the ego is what makes it possible for someone, to say, 'I am who I am'.

Uxkull's book about the Tarot, or Book of Thoth, was published in Munich in 1922, entitled *Die Einweihung im alten Ägypten nach dem Buch Thoth* (*Initiation in Ancient Egypt in accordance with the Book of Thoth*). A second edition was issued in Berlin in 1931.⁶ The book contained 22 drawings in the text by an artist from Innsbruck, Leo Sebastian Humer, corresponding to the Tarot trumps but supposedly reconstructing the cycle of paintings in the initiatory temple at Memphis.⁷ (See plate 5a.) This idea was borrowed from Paul Christian's *Histoire de la magie* of 1870; but Uxkull has greatly elaborated it.

In the second edition, entitled *Tarot der Eingeweihten*, (*Tarot of the Initiates*), Berlin, 1957, of his book *Tarot, der uralte Schlüssel Salomonis zur Erforschung und Meisterung Deines Schicksal* (*Tarot, the Ancient Key of Solomon to the Investigation and Mastery of Your Destiny*) of 1951, which had been volume 11 in a series of 'Magical Handbooks', Joachim Winckelmann included a pack of cards, comprising only the 22 trumps, whose designers were given as Erich and Liesel Mutze. In the book Winckelmann glancingly mentions the previous work by Uxkull, but nowhere says that the designs of the Mutze cards simply reproduce, with some slight elaborations, those by Humer, who goes unmentioned.⁸

Uxkull's book is not a novel: it is an entirely imaginary reconstruction of a process of initiation, undergone by a young man being inducted into the priesthood, supposedly taking place before ever the Pyramids or the Sphinx were constructed. Uxkull explains his book as the fruit in part of his studies of the works of occultists and mystics, and in part of his own imagination. It is divided into three parts: the Tests; the Instruction; the Initiation. The tests are truly terrifying, but the young man, guided by a fourfold command (derived from the writings of Éliphas Lévi), to know, to will, to dare and to be silent, comes through them unscathed. The second and third parts of the book are divided into sections, one for each of the 22 paintings in the hall of the temple, eleven on each side. These correspond to the Tarot trumps, arranged with the Fool last. Humer's illustrations are reproduced, section by section, in large format. They are based distantly

upon the Tarot de Marseille, but of course are in thoroughly Egyptianised style. Over 22 days, the neophyte is instructed by the High Priest in the mystic meanings of the paintings, one each day; in the section entitled 'Initiation', devoted to the Xth painting onwards, he also experiences visions during the night-time. The High Priest's instruction is on each occasion a kind of sermon. In the instruction on the IIIrd painting, he speaks of the divine triad, composed of Osiris, who represents thought, Isis, who represents the Word, and Horus, who represents Spirit; and in that on the IVth painting, he anticipates the doctrine of the Trinity even more closely, saying expressly that the Godhead is triune: Osiris, Isis, Horus. In the same instruction he tells the neophyte that he consists of four parts: body, life, soul and ego; death is the dissolution of the ties between these four.

Each of the 22 designs in Humer's 'reconstruction' bears a large Hebrew letter, beginning with *Aleph* on painting I and continuing to *Shin* on painting XXI and *Tau* on painting 0, the Fool. The attribution is therefore not entirely that of Lévi and of Papus, both of whom inserted the Fool between the last two trumps, so associating *Shin* with the Fool and *Tau* with the World (trump XXI); but in all the other twenty cases, Uxkull is in agreement with them. The paintings, here denoted by Roman numerals, have, for the most part, multiple names.

I is the Magician, Osiris, and the absolute Active. The design shows a figure seen in profile, holding a wand aloft and wearing a conical hat with a brim shaped like the sign of infinity; he stands before a table on which, the High Priest states, stand a staff, a vessel, a cross or sword and a coin.

II is the Priestess, Isis, and the absolute Passive. She is enthroned and holds a key in her left hand.

III is the Queen, the Spirit, the absolute Neutral. She is seated on a rock, facing an eagle on another rock. Oddly, she is said to represent Horus. The High Priest explains that there are three paths through the cycle of paintings, going from each painting to that three later: the path of Osiris, running from I through IV, VII, X, XIII and XVI to XIX; that of Isis, running from II through V, VIII, XI, XIV and XVII to XX; and that of Horus, running from III through VI, IX, XII, XV and XVIII to XXI.

IV is the Pharaoh, Law and Will. He sits upon a throne, his left leg crossed over his right.

V is the High Priest, Authority and Understanding. He, too is seated; seen in profile, two figures kneel before him.

VI is the Lover, Love and Beauty. A young man, seen from the front, stands between two women, one naked, the other clothed; from the clouds a figure aims an arrow at him.

VII is the Chariot of Osiris and Complication. Seen in profile, he stands in a chariot drawn by two sphinxes, one white and one black (an idea of Éliphas Lévi's).

VIII is Truth and Justice. Seated and blindfolded, she holds a pair of scales in her left hand and a sword in her right.

IX is the Pilgrim and Prudence. Wearing a hood, he stands in the desert, a staff in his right hand and a lantern in his left.

X is the Wheel of Life. A sphinx floats in the clouds above a rotating wheel. The High Priest explains the two figures on the wheel as being the good god, whom he calls 'Hermanibus', and the bad god, Typhon. He also repeats the maxim to know, to will, to dare and to be silent.

XI is Mut and Magical Powers. It shows a woman, wearing a conical hat whose brim is shaped as the sign of infinity, stroking a lion which licks her hand.

XII is the Hanged Man and the Test. The man is hanged by one foot from the crossbar of a gallows with two uprights; his other leg is bent across that by which he is suspended. He has no halo.

XIII is Death. A skeletal figure on a rearing horse towers over three women who approach a fourth one entering a tomb. The High Priest teaches the neophyte that death is not the end, but a transition.

XIV is Reincarnation. A woman with the usual conical hat and infinity sign pours water from one jug into another.

XV is Falsehood and Injustice. A figure with bat wings sits on a cubic block, to which are chained two naked figures who crouch before him.

XVI is the House of God, Ruin and Destruction. Lightning strikes a crumbling tower, from which a single figure falls headlong.

XVII is Hope and Union. A standing female figure with conical hat and infinity sign pours water from two jugs; a large star with six small sisters shines in the sky; behind the woman is a bush with a large bird upon it.

XVIII is Chaos and Passion. The moon, without a face, shines upon two dogs which bay at it; a hill rises before them, with two towers upon it, while a crab swims in a small pool below.

XIX is Full Life. The sun, said by the High Priest to be the Sun of Osiris, shines upon a rider on a prancing horse; the sun has no face. From this point on the High Priest's instructions are full of numerological operations by means of secret reduction (repeated addition of digits until a number less than 10 is reached) and secret addition (adding all the numbers up to the given one): these are the operations used by Papus in his theorising.

XX is immortality. Upright figures emerge from two tombs, three from one and two from the other; another figure blowing a trumpet, but without wings, stands upon a cloud above.

XXI is 'God is all', or, as the High Priest has it, 'God is all in all'. A feminine figure with a diaphanous veil dances within an oval surround; at the four corners outside the oval are figures consisting of two wings and a head, the head of a lion, an eagle, a bull and a man respectively.

0 is the Fool. A wanderer holding a staff and a pack on his back back crosses the desert. A dog bites him from behind, as in the Tarot de Marseille; a crocodile, derived from Paul Christian, threatens him from in front. According to the High Priest, the Fool represents the man who has missed his divine vocation.

It is highly improbable that von Uxkull's book achieved any great success; it was more obviously an exposition of the author's interpretation of the ancient Egyptian religion than of the Tarot. It had an echo much later, however, in a book published anonymously in Amsterdam in 1981 under the title *Egyptische Mysterien: Verslag van een Inwijding* (*Egyptian Mysteries: an Account of an Initiation*); a translation was issued as *Egyptian Mysteries* in 1988 in York Beach, Maine. The Introduction appears to ascribe the original of the text to Iamblichus. This agrees with C.C. Zain's statement of 1936 that Iamblichus had 'left an important document entitled, An Egyptian Initiation';⁹ he went on to say that it was translated into French from the original MS by Paul Christian, and in 1901 into English by Genevieve Stebbins. The American edition of *Egyptian Mysteries* has a Foreword which is probably special to it and is also anonymous. Its author appears unaware of Christian's *Histoire de la magie*, and disagrees with the attribution to Iamblichus. He says (p. vii) that the author and date of the text are unknown, but allows that it was translated by Paul Christian from an MS and circulated by him privately. He supposes it to have been composed by German Illuminati of the XVIII century, but does not explain why they should have written in Greek, or

why, if they did not, Christian should have thought that he was translating an original text of Iamblichus. He claims that the published text of *Egyptian Mysteries* is based on a late XVIII-century German MS.

In fact, it is firmly based on a far more recent work, namely on von Uxkull's *Einweihung im alten Ägypten*; it is little more than a rehash of that book. As in the *Einweihung*, after he has passed the tests he has to undergo, the young initiate into the Egyptian priesthood is on successive days shown one of the painted symbols corresponding to the Tarot trumps and has its meaning explained to him. Just as in von Uxkull's book, these symbols are said to form three paths, those of Osiris, Isis and Horus: that of Osiris consists of the symbols I, IV, VII and so on, that of Isis of the symbols II, V, VIII and so on, and that of Horus of symbol III and every third one thereafter. Diagrams of the three paths reproduce, in very small format, Humer's illustrations to von Uxkull's book. Humer's design for the 22nd symbol, called 'the Madman' and numbered 0, is separately displayed. Most of the symbols are given names, largely agreeing with those of von Uxkull. No doubt those who devised *Egyptian Mysteries* assumed that von Uxkull's work was too thoroughly forgotten for anyone to spot the plagiarism.

Much greater renown than von Uxkull's book was achieved by a work by August Frank Glahn, who wrote as A. Frank Glahn, entitled *Das deutsche Tarotbuch: Wahrsagung/Astrologie/Weisheit, drei Stufen der Einweihung* (*The German Tarot-Book: Prediction/Astrology/Wisdom, three Levels of Initiation*), published at Bad Oldesloe in 1924. Uranus-Verlag, the publishing house, moved to Memmingen, and the second edition came out from there in 1933.^{[10](#)} Glahn wrote extensively on occult subjects, particularly on astrology. His Tarot-Book, in which he, too, designates the Tarot pack as *das Buch Thot* (the Book of Thoth), became better known than either of the two books by Kurtzahn and Uxkull, and was certainly much longer and fuller than either. Glahn mentions Kurtzahn, though somewhat disparagingly; but Uxkull, to whom he appears to have been greatly indebted, he leaves entirely without mention until the very end, when he praises his book and remarks that it agrees with many of his own ideas, but says that it came into his hands only when the composition of his *Tarotbuch* was far advanced. We may treat this claim with some scepticism. The second edition of Glahn's book may possibly have attained greater popularity than the first. However that may have been, the

popularity must have attached primarily, not to Glahn's text, but to the pack of 78 Tarot cards designed by Hans Schubert of Reinfeld in Holstein and issued by the same printer in conjunction with the book.¹¹ The book itself is long-winded, ill-organised and rambling; a great deal of the text is not about the Tarot at all, and its explanations lack clarity.

Schubert's pack is yet another instance of the Egyptianised variety of occult Tarot packs, although it is not as rigorously Egyptianised as the trump subjects drawn by Humer for von Uxkull.¹² The names of the trumps are mostly borrowed from von Uxkull, and are as follows:

I	the Magician	XII	the Test
II	the High Priestess	XIII	Death
III	the (Woman) Ruler (<i>Herrscherin</i>)	XIV	Reincarnation
IV	the Ruler	XV	the Black Magician
V	the High Priest	XVI	the Lightning
VI	the Crossroads	XVII	Redemption
VII	Triumph	XVIII	Blind Passion
VIII	Justice	XIX	Spiritual Life
IX	the Wise Man	XX	Eternal Life
X	the Wheel of Fate	XXI	All in All
XI	Force	0	the Fool

Glahn mentions the pack in his text, assigning the designs for it to Schubert and making the same claim for it as Kurtzahn had made for his, that it was the very first German Tarot pack. Glahn mentions both Lévi (whose name he spells Lévy) and Papus, and refers to Kurtzahn as reproducing their views. As for himself, he says that he does not agree with them altogether. All the trump cards of Schubert's pack bear Hebrew letters, and one point on which Glahn disagreed with Lévi and Papus was evidently how to attribute the one to the other: Glahn followed Uxkull in assigning *Aleph* to trump I and so on down to XX, just as Lévi and Papus had done, but continuing by assigning *Shin* to trump XXI and *Tau* to 0 (the Fool). In one section of his book, however, concerning the major Arcana and the Book of Job, Glahn reverts to Lévi's attribution, assigning *Shin* to the Fool and *Tau* to the XXI. Elsewhere in the book Glahn again borrows from Uxkull in discerning three sequences or paths among the major Arcana, the first beginning with trump I, the second with trump II and the third with trump III; in each sequence, each trump is followed by the one with a number higher by 3 (trump I followed by trump IV and so on). Despite his use of Hebrew letters, Uxkull had said nothing about the Cabala, evidently declining rightly to associate it with ancient Egypt.

Glahn says much about the Cabala, and associates the numbers from 1 to 22, and thus implicitly the major Arcana, with the paths on the Tree of Life;¹³ he also says a very great deal about astrology, with which much of his book is taken up. He wishes to replace the zodiac with what he claims to be an older system of 22 'Moon-stations', each associated with one of the major Arcana; but it remains unclear just what these Moon-stations are. The book contains also a brief section about runes, and a longer exposition of a numerological method of predicting someone's future from the date and place of his birth.

In Schubert's German Tarot pack, the main design of each card is enclosed in a rectangle. For the major Arcana, the name of each card in German is printed immediately below the rectangle. A Hebrew letter, followed by its equivalent in Roman letters (e.g. TS for *Tsaddi*), stands above the rectangle at the left, and a rune at the right. The number of each trump is given by a Roman numeral, with an astrological symbol below it, standing outside and at the top of the left-hand edge of the rectangle, and also, reversed, at the bottom of the right-hand edge; on Arcana I, XIII and 0, the symbols for fire, water and air respectively, are added to the astrological symbol. Except on trump I, divinatory meanings are given in the centre at the top, alongside the left-hand edge and, reversed, at the very bottom of the card, to give the meaning of the card when reversed.

Given that the style is approximately ancient Egyptian and that they are essentially variants on those of Humer from Uxkull's book, the designs of the trumps offer few surprises. The principal differences from Humer's designs are as follows. The High Priestess (II) is seen from the front, rather than in profile, as is the Ruler (IV), before whom four figures prostrate themselves. On the Triumph card (VII), Osiris is seen from in front, but his chariot is still drawn by one white sphinx and one black one. The figure of Justice (VIII) is naked and is seen from the front; she stands behind a large pair of scales, rather than holding them in her hand. On the Force card (XI), a man rather than a woman opens the jaws of the lion. Death (XIII) shows a figure with an hourglass standing above a tomb which many people are entering. The Black Magician (XV), seen from the front, is seated on a throne at the top of several steps. On the Lightning card (XVI), the tower struck by lightning stands a little behind another tower which escapes damage. The female figure pouring water from two jugs on the Redemption card (XVII) is seen from the front, standing on an

island in the sea. The two towers on the card entitled Blind Passion (XVIII) are in the background, rather than on the right, and the moon has a face. The card called Spiritual Life (XIX) is perhaps the most striking. A blazing sun, whose rays extend to the edges of the design, shines behind the rider, whose horse leaps high and who holds his arms apart; below him are two small seated children. On the card Eternal Life (XX) joyful figures ascend an incline with stone walls. The dancing figure on the card 'All in All' (XXI) is not completely surrounded by the oval, but, rather, enclosed in it at an angle. The Fool (0), still menaced by a crocodile, flees in terror from the dog that bites him.

Glahn's names for the suits are Staffs (*Stäbe*), Goblets (*Pokale*), Swords (*Degen*) and Coins (*Münzeri*). The court figures he calls King (*König*), Queen (*Königin*), Knight (*Ritter*) and Knave (*Bube*). The suit cards are numbered continuously, after the manner of Etteilla. For this purpose, the cards rank within each suit in the order King, Queen, Knight, Jack, 10, 9, ..., 2, Ace, and the suits in the order Staffs (Bats), Goblets (Cups), Swords, Coins; all the cards of any suit precede all those of the next in the numbering. Although the Fool is numbered 0, it is treated as if it were numbered 22, so that the numbering of the suit cards begins with the King of Staffs as 23, and continues to the Ace of Coins as 78. Each suit card has an Arabic numeral to indicate its number at the top of the left-hand side outside the rectangle that encloses the main design. Below this numeral is a small suit-sign to indicate its suit, and below that a letter or Arabic numeral to denote its rank; for the court cards, the letters are K for *König*, D for *Dame*, R for *Ritter* and B for *Bube*; the Aces are indicated by the numeral 1 rather than the letter A. The suit-sign and letter or numeral, but not the numeral indicating the place of the card in the whole sequence, are repeated, the other way up, at the bottom of the right-hand side outside the rectangle. At the top of that side on each card, and reversed at the bottom of the left-hand side, is the symbol for one of the planets; in addition to the planetary symbol attached to each individual court card, those of Staffs all bear the symbol for Saturn, those of Goblets that for Jupiter, those of Swords that for Mars, and those of Coins that for Mercury. Divinatory meanings are given at the top of each suit card, and different ones, reversed, at the bottom; the numeral cards, but not the court cards, have yet different ones at the left-hand side. The Kings and Queens are all seated; the Aces all show only a single suit-sign, without a hand to hold it.

On the numeral cards of Staffs and Swords, the suit-signs are arranged to form geometric patterns; on the 5 of Staffs they form a pentagram. The Coins are plain circles, save that on the 9, 7 and 6 they bear planetary symbols, that one coin of the 4 and both coins of the 2 show eagles, and the Ace has a Pharaoh's image on the coin.

In the year after the publication of his *Tarotbuch*, another book on the Tarot by A. Frank Glahn appeared, entitled *Praktische Anleitung zum Erlernen der wissenschaftlichen Prophetie aus Karten* (*Practical Instruction for Learning Scientific Prophecy from the Cards*) (Bad Oldesloe, 1925). This is virtually an abridgement of the *Tarotbuch*; gone are the long section on Etteilla and a great deal of irrelevant matter, although there is still a good deal of astrology. Probably Glahn realised that people keen to learn about the Tarot needed something shorter and more concentratedly about that subject than the *Tarotbuch* had been, although those anxious to practise fortune-telling with Tarot cards must still have found the *Anleitung* confusing, particularly in view of the multiplicity of divinatory meanings assigned to each card. Almost the only new items are a complaint against those who call trump I the Juggler (*der Gaukler*) instead of the Magician (*der Magier*), an association of the elements air, water, fire and earth to trumps XVII, XVIII, XIX and XXI respectively, and a long and sarcastic note at the very end of the book concerning Kurtzahn. According to Glahn, Kurtzahn had criticised his entitling his book a 'German' Tarot-Book; more likely, he had complained of Glahn's claim to have produced the very first German Tarot. Glahn refers to Kurtzahn's own book on the Tarot, of which he says contemptuously but with some justice that it is in large part an abbreviated copy of the book by Papus. No love was entertained between the two German occultists for each other.

Although both Uxkull and Glahn differed from Lévi on the attribution of the last two letters of the Hebrew alphabet to the Tarot trumps, they and Kurtzahn were firmly in the tradition of the French school, of Etteilla, Lévi, Christian and Papus. None of them gives, for example, any hint of the Golden Dawn's interchange of trumps VIII and XI. Through Aleister Crowley, the influence of the Golden Dawn had infiltrated the teachings of the Ordo Templi Orientis, founded in Germany and still predominantly German in membership; but the occultism of the German promoters of the

esoteric Tarot in the 1920s appears to have been quite uninfluenced by the O.T.O., which was soon to be suppressed by the Nazi authorities.

Interest in the Tarot, and in occultism generally, seems to have died down during the Nazi period. Since the Second World War, there has been some slight revival of interest in it in Germany, exemplified by Joachim Winckelmann's book and the Tarot trumps, based on those designed by Humer for Uxkull, supplied with it. But then there is no Western country from which the Tarot mystique has been quite absent in the years since 1950; Germany has been far from taking a lead in promoting it.

CHAPTER 13

Russia

At the beginning of the XX century, the Russian intelligentsia were greatly interested in Orthodox mysticism, French occultism and Mme Blavatsky's Theosophy. Society and culture in general, as well as spiritual values, were in flux. In the winter of 1899-1900, and again in 1901, Dr Papus appeared in St Petersburg. On the second visit he brought his spiritual mentor, Maître Philippe de Lyon (Nizier-Anthelme Philippe). They were presented to the Tsar, said to have been a fellow member of the Martinist Order. Papus founded a Martinist lodge, The Cross and Star, in Tsarskoye Selo (modern Pushkin), near St Petersburg. The Frenchmen became personal friends of the imperial family. Maître Philippe died in 1905, a year in which the Russian court would have welcomed his solace: the Tsar's authority was threatened by riots, strikes, assassinations and military defeat by the Japanese. Papus promised that the monarchy would be protected for as long as he lived.¹ Both of Papus' Tarot books, *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (1889) and *Le Tarot Divinatoire* (1909) would have been accessible to Russian intellectuals.

G.O. Mebes and his followers

Papus's Russian lodge included Gregory O. Mebes (1869-1930),² who taught mathematics at Pageskiy Korpus, a secondary school in Tsarskoye Selo. The lodge was active for less than a decade, but was revived in 1910 when Czesław Czynski (1858-1932) became the Sovereign Representative of the Martinist Order in Russia. (His name in the Order was Dr Punar Bhava.)

Mebes began offering lectures on Tarot symbolism, generally following the examples of Papus and Lévi, supplying each Arcanum with various associations and correspondences – Cabalistic, alchemical, astrological and magical. As a mathematician, Mebes used his own number symbolism to explain each trump. Such symbolism drew him into many digressions.

The fourth trump inspired him to meditate on the Tetragrammaton (YHVH). While interpreting the tenth trump, he digressed on the ten *sephiroth* and the ten numeral cards in each Tarot suit. The number seven inspired references to the seven sacraments in the Orthodox and Catholic Churches and to the seven planets.

In 1912 Mebes broke with the Martinist Order and became the leader of his own group of students, with whom he used the Tarot as part of an occultist curriculum. A more recent author, Mouni Sadhu, hints that Mebes' group was called the 'Kabbalistic Order of Rosicrucianism';³ but Sadhu seems poorly informed about Mebes. Mebes introduced elements considered Templar, and he emphasised occultist suppositions about 'bodies'. The human consists of a physical, an astral and a mental body, he claimed: the astral and mental bodies comprise an 'astrosome', which can travel to other places and times. These concepts were adduced to explain clairvoyance, spirit messages, astral projection, *déjà vu* and visions of the past and future as revealed during hypnosis, dreaming and trance. In addition, a whole community collectively possesses one spiritual body, called an 'egregore'. (The term derives from the Greek *gregorios*, meaning watcher.) Mebes explained historical movements in terms of the interaction of egregores. They appear, as the angelic Watchers, in the Old Testament and the books of Enoch. Papus had doubtless informed his Russian friends about the egregores in Éliphas Lévi's writings.

In 1912 Mebes' Tarot lessons were published as *Kurs entziklopedii okkultizma* (*Course on an 'Encyclopedia of Occultism'*), the 'Encyclopedia' being the Tarot. The commentary filled two volumes. Mebes or his followers soon adopted the use of the Waite/Smith Tarot, but they expunged or ignored the numerals on Strength and Justice so that the traditional French order could be maintained. Some of these Russian students of the Tarot, by mistake or by design, counterchanged the numerals on the Hierophant and the Chariot.⁴

Vladimir Shmakov, an engineer, wrote a Tarot book, *Sviashchennaia kniga Tota, velikie arkany Taro* (*The Sacred Book of Thoth: the Major Arcana of the Tarot*, Moscow) in 1916. It features no illustrated cards on any of its 510 pages. Shmakov cites *An Encyclopedic Course in Occultism*, briefly mentioning Mebes' lessons as extremely valuable for their intent and content, but arguing that they are downright impossible in their exposition.⁵ Nevertheless, Shmakov follows Mebes' own ramblings: for

instance, the Tetragrammaton is applied to Arcanum IV, and the *sephiroth* are explained along with Arcanum X. He employs a uniform format: for each Arcanum, he gives its traditional name, Hebrew letter, number and essential symbolism. The synopses of symbols range from a few lines to a few paragraphs. The key concepts can be traced to Éliphas Lévi, who is cited more than 50 times. However, where he gives Latin names to the Arcana, Shmakov also follows Papus and Paul Christian. The Fool – which is the second last Arcanum, and can be numbered 0 or XXI – is called *Furca* (‘Fork’, referring to the shape of the Hebrew letter *Shin*: both *Furca* and *Shin* mark the heading of [Chapter XXI](#) of Lévi's *Dogme*). In naming Arcanum XXII, Shmakov includes *Absolutum* (after Lévi and Papus) and *Corona Magica* (after Paul Christian's ‘Crown of the Magi’). Most of Shmakov's book is occupied with quotations from writers other than Tarotists who treat of metaphysical themes. He draws from the Bible, the Koran and the *Zohar*, and from Neoplatonists, Hindus and others. He appends a brief bibliography of French cartomancers: Iwan Gilkin, J.-G. Bourgeat, Julia Orsini and Papus.⁶ Elsewhere Shmakov compliments the 1912 work of another Russian Tarotist, P.D. Ouspensky.⁷

Mebes’ work was issued in Polish as *Tajemna Wiedza Duchowa, encyklopedyczny wyklad nauk tajemnej wiedzy duchowej* (*Occult Spiritual Knowledge: Encyclopaedia of the Complete Exposition of a Course of Occult Knowledge Based on Egyptian Symbolism*, Cieszyn, Poland, 2 vols, 1921), translated by Karol Chobot and published by his brother Jozef. The author is given only as *prof. G.O.M. w Piotrogradzie* (*Prof G.O.M. in Petrograd*). The illustrations include all the major Arcana. The Fool, the World and the Popess are redrawings after Wirth's illustrations in Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. The rest of Mebes’ Arcana have been redrawn after the Waite/Smith Tarot. Their names are lacking, but Roman numerals stand at the tops of most cards. The exceptions are Justice and Strength: Waite's numbers here have been omitted so that the French tradition can be maintained. The illustrations for Arcana V and VII are counterchanged, as though the charioteer were properly called the Hierophant, and the papal figure the Chariot. Chobot explains this as a printer's error, but it may be an authentic inheritance from Mebes, for it is found in the work of Ouspensky (see below).

By this time, Mebes’ group contained 43 members. From 1918 to 1921 he delivered lectures on the *Zohar*, and his wife, Marta Nesterova, spoke

on religious history – with a distinct bias against Christianity. Mebes' friend, a lawyer with the occult name of 'Astromov' (actually Kiritchenko), had lectured on Freemasonry, but was expelled from the group in 1921. He formed a Martinist lodge called Three Northern Stars, with groups meeting in Moscow, Tiflis and Kiev. In 1925 in a excess of zeal, Astromov wrote to Stalin and other Communist officials whom he supposed would be eager to become Masons. The police raided his home and confiscated his lists of Masons and occultists. In February 1926 Astromov and twenty others, including Mebes, were arrested. On 18 June 1926 the detainees were tried: Astromov and Mebes were condemned to three years in a labour camp. Although an amnesty in 1927 should have curtailed the punishment, the two occultists were sentenced to another three years, beginning on 24 August 1928. Mebes died, presumably still imprisoned, in 1930.⁸

Kniga Germiesa (*Book of Hermes*, Shanghai, 1937) was issued by Shanghai's Russian Occult Centre, which reportedly attributes the text to Édouard Schuré and Éliphas Lévi, but its real source is the 'course' by G.O. Mebes.⁹ *Kniga Germiesa* is illustrated with the major Arcana in a highly atmospheric style, with deep shadows and radiant highlights.¹⁰ The Empress has become Isis; twelve stars, formerly part of her crown, orbit overhead as she directs them with her sceptre. The Emperor, presented as a standing pharaoh, derives from Goulinat's Tarot.¹¹ The Chariot, the Wheel and the Devil descend from Lévi's drawings. The Hermit recalls Wirth's version, with the slithering snake and the cane of joined segments. The figure of Temperance is still winged and holds the usual urns, but, having become a Solar Genius, has been transformed into a nude male suspended in space. The Fool still ignores Paul Christian's crocodile, here transformed into a dragon. The World shows a nude woman framed, not with the traditional wreath, but with a circling serpent, as in the respective cards by Etteilla and Goulinat. The cards in *Kniga Germiesa* bear no inscriptions.

Mebes influenced famous Tarotists such as Ouspensky, Sadhu and Tomberg. Tomberg mentions Mebes, Shmakov and Ouspensky. Sadhu mentions Mebes and Ouspensky. Ouspensky, however, mentions none of the others.

Ouspensky

Pyotr Demianovich Ouspensky was born in Moscow on 5 March 1878. He was highly perceptive and had lasting memories dating from his second year. His father, Demian Ouspensky, worked in the government's Survey Service and excelled at mathematics. Pyotr had a similar aptitude, but his father did not live long enough to tutor him. Pyotr's maternal grandfather, a painter, died in 1882; Pyotr received his primary training from his mother and maternal grandmother. Both women were knowledgeable about fine art and opened their homes to artists, authors and scholars. Ouspensky reportedly experienced a frequent sense of *déjà vu* and clairvoyant dreams, beginning in his sixth year. He and his little sister developed a paranormal pastime: when confined to their nursery, they would sit at the window and accurately predict events about to occur in the street. Ouspensky's mental abilities, however, did not mean that he was attuned to formal schooling. He rebelled against studying arbitrarily chosen subjects in regimented classes. At the age of sixteen, he contrived a practical joke, probably directed at an administrator, and was expelled from school. Moscow University accepted him as a 'free listener'; he completed his education through independent reading. He became fluent in English and Italian, but never mastered Latin or Greek, which prevented his obtaining a university degree.

Ouspensky was to travel widely. After the death of his mother, he went to Paris and to the Russian provinces. While there, he may have become involved in an ill-fated love affair, for such an episode occurs in an allegory that he wrote in 1905.¹² The story concerns Eternal Recurrence, the theory that one's life and death repeat in an endless cycle. Ouspensky's protagonist is conscious of his cosmic predicament; he foresees and regrets his flaws and failures, but is powerless to alter them.

In the uprising of 1905 Ouspensky's sister was arrested and imprisoned. Although Ouspensky felt a strong bond with her, he did not adopt her revolutionary goals – he believed that the system of class distinctions was necessary for social harmony, and in general disdained practical politics. He likewise despised the employment that he found as a reporter, beginning with a Moscow newspaper, *The Morning*. He felt that journalism promoted trivialities and deceptions, whereas he sought eternal truths. In 1906 he joined the Theosophical Society. His reading included books by Éliphas Lévi and by Stanislas de Guaita. He travelled in Turkey, Greece and Egypt and studied their mystic traditions, which he esteemed.

In 1908 his sister died in prison and he submerged his grief in meditation. He and his sister had become convinced that time is illusory, and this subject became his focus for philosophical inquiry.

Early in 1909 Ouspensky left Moscow for St Petersburg. His reporting took him abroad, perhaps as far as America; but he found time to write books that brought him wide acclaim. The first was *Chetvertoe izmerenie* (*The Fourth Dimension*, St Petersburg, 1909).¹³ At least as early as the XVIII century, philosophers had hypothesised that time could be understood to be the fourth dimension. Ouspensky preserved the concept of temporality as constituting a fourth dimension. He observed that time and space cannot be understood objectively: that they are inevitably filtered through psychological processes. This ‘psychic’ component fascinated him. He concluded finally – if vaguely – ‘We have every right to say that thought moves along the fourth dimension’.¹⁴ Some occultists reasoned that thought is exempt from the constraints of space and therefore naturally capable of clairvoyance, precognition and communication with departed souls, but Ouspensky rejected spiritualism in favour of Eternal Recurrence: one's life is endlessly repeated on earth and does not ordinarily advance to any other realm, he argued. He did believe in clairvoyance and precognition, but was sure that the acquisition of such abilities required far more work than he saw exerted by most occultists. He became very sceptical of the ‘supernatural’ feats performed by Theosophists and soon withdrew from the Society. He undertook his own experiments in transcendental awareness, using yoga, theurgy and probably drugs. His *Tertium Organum* (*The Third Organon*, St Petersburg, 1911)¹⁵ enlarges on the psychological aspects of the fourth dimension as he conceived it. The book's title refers to the concept of intuition as an instrument of knowledge, beyond Sir Francis Bacon's scientific method (discussed in his *Novum Organum*) and Aristotle's logic (discussed in his *Organon*). Ouspensky was no longer content merely to comprehend time and space; he hoped to transcend them for a direct experience of ‘cosmic consciousness’.¹⁶ This could be achieved by traditional means, namely magical and mystical techniques. With such techniques imagination and ‘ecstasy’ are more important than reason and deduction. Higher consciousness should begin, not with science and mathematics, but with meditation and appreciation of the arts. According to Mouni Sadhu, the

young Ouspensky's master in occultism was Professor G.O.M. (i.e. Mebes).¹⁷

Ouspensky produced a slim book, *Symboly Taro (The Symbolism of the Tarot)*, St Petersburg) in 1912. It was doubtless meant to exemplify his personal use of the higher consciousness that he extolled. He endorses the popular belief that the Tarot is 'a summary of the Hermetic Sciences – the Cabala, Alchemy, Astrology and Magic, with their different divisions'. Following Lévi and Papus, Ouspensky assumes that the four Tarot suits and the four court cards in each suit symbolise the Tetragrammaton. He allows that the usual positions of the Hierophant and the Chariot can be interchanged. He numbers Strength and Justice as in the Waite/Smith Tarot, although he does not mention the pack itself. Its imagery greatly influences Ouspensky's 22 'pen pictures', in which he describes the Arcana in visionary terms. Oswald Wirth's Tarot provides Ouspensky with a few details: the High Priestess holds two keys; the Empress has wings; the Hermit wanders in a desert 'where only serpents lived'. The Fool is Wirth's leering jester, unaware of the lurking crocodile and the attacking lynx. More importantly, Ouspensky contemplates the trumps in two parallel rows, as Wirth recommended in his essay for Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, and briefly quotes it. Ouspensky claims that the cards can be explained only in the prescribed pairings. As can be seen in the following synopsis, he permits quite different relationships to unite the terms in any one pair:¹⁸ sometimes they are in concord, sometimes in conflict. He does not explain why the Tarot's designer(s) would be so arbitrary.

Magician =	Higher Consciousness, while the Fool is Lower Consciousness.
High Priestess =	the Wisdom needed to understand the cosmos, the World .
Empress =	Nature, from whom rebirth emanates in the Judgement trump.
Emperor =	the Tetragrammaton, seen as pure light in the Sun .
Chariot =	Magic conquest, risking pseudo-occultism, as desolate as the Moon .
Lovers =	Emotion, comparable to the forces in the Star , Nature's 'soul'.
Hierophant =	the inner Path, distinct from failed externals, the Tower .
Strength =	spiritual Power, while the Devil expresses spiritual weakness.
Hermit =	the Initiate, overcoming the illusions of Time (Temperance).
Wheel of Fortune =	the Wheel of Life, which revolves again after Death .
Justice =	Truth, learned by suffering, which is symbolised in the Hanged Man .

Ouspensky groups the trumps in septenaries under the three themes of 'Man' (Magician, Fool, Chariot, Hermit, Lovers, Devil and Hanged Man), 'Nature' (Empress, Wheel, Death, Time, Tower, Sun and Judgement), and 'Theosophy' (High Priestess, Emperor, Strength, Hierophant, Justice, Star and Moon). He does not elaborate on these themes or the sequences in which he presents the cards.

The cards clearly become vehicles for Ouspensky's own philosophy of time. He renames Temperance as Time, reviving an old pun on *tempus*, the Latin for 'time'. (In mediaeval art, Temperance sometimes carries a clock on her head.) He claims that Temperance is controlling the stream of time, which can flow in two directions: he taught that exceptional souls can be reincarnated in the past as well as the future.¹⁹ Both the Wheel of Fortune and the World's wreath, for him, represent the Circle of Time, i.e. Eternal Recurrence. Ouspensky has the Devil say that he conspires with Death and Time. 'In order to quit this triangle it is necessary to see that it does not exist.' The cure-all is introspection, in which one discovers one's existence in eternity. This is the mystery revealed by the High Priestess, the Lovers and the Hierophant. Other positive trumps stress the unity and infinity of consciousness.

Avid for initiation in a school of ancient wisdom, Ouspensky contrived a voyage to the East. He first visited London, where he promised to report on his travels if compensated by *New Age*, the progressive journal founded and edited by A.R. Orage (1873-1934). *New Age* carried reviews of J.F.C. Fuller's *The Star in the West* and of Crowley's *Konx Om Pax*. (Orage may have been a member of the Golden Dawn, but his name has never been found on a membership list.²⁰ In any event, his flirtation with occultism was short-lived.)

Ouspensky's visit must have brought attention to his Tarot book. An English translation was undertaken by Mme A.L. Pogossy, a Theosophist whose London shop featured artwork from her native Russia.²¹ *The Symbolism of the Tarot* appeared in 1913 in St Petersburg. Ouspensky, meanwhile, proceeded through France, Italy and Egypt to Ceylon and India. During his contemplation of the Taj Mahal, it seemed to him to be transfigured into a model of the cosmos; Ouspensky felt that this was the message intended by the architects, whom he supposed to have been Sufi adepts. However, he was sad to discover that – in his estimation – the esoteric schools of India were now in decline. Although he found some

attractions in Ceylon, he returned to Russia, where in 1915 he lectured on his 'search for the miraculous' and his glimpses of a higher reality. His audiences grew to more than a thousand in Moscow and Petrograd (as St Petersburg had been renamed in 1914).

Ouspensky had already come to the attention of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, a wandering teacher, reputedly an initiate in Eastern esoterism. Gurdjieff had been born in Alexandropol to an Armenian mother and a Greek father. He was planning to establish an institute for developing self-awareness ('self remembering'), which he and his followers called 'the Work' or 'the Fourth Way'. The latter referred to a synthesis of three vocations – the fakir's, the yogi's and the monk's. Gurdjieff prodded his students to 'wake up' from a life of habit and mechanical behaviour. He hinted that his lessons were founded on a complete theory of cosmology, psychology and spiritual evolution; but he never revealed a comprehensive system or referred to specific sources.²² The psychological discipline presupposed that all uninstructed persons had divided natures, and its purpose was to integrate the fragments into whole selves. Gurdjieff directed one of his pupils to invite Ouspensky to a meeting. Ouspensky of course was already primed for instruction, and Gurdjieff was eager to use him as a recruiter for the Work in Petrograd. Unfortunately the two men were temperamentally incompatible, Ouspensky being introverted, methodical and romantic, while Gurdjieff was extroverted, spontaneous and pragmatic.

Ouspensky formed a friendship with one of Gurdjieff's students, Sophia Grigorieva (1874-1963). She had been married twice and had a daughter of marriageable age. Sophia became known as 'Mme Ouspensky', although the couple probably never legally married. Perhaps the partnership was intended to ensure Sophia's security during the civil unrest in Russia.²³ (We may pause to observe the panic of the Tsarina herself when she wrote to the Tsar, then commanding the Russian army, embroiled in World War I. Papus had just died. 'We are doomed,' she lamented.²⁴ Her reasoning was perhaps flawed, but her intuition was correct.) Ouspensky was drafted into the army as a sapper, but obtained a discharge because of his poor eyesight: he was highly dependent on his characteristic pince-nez. When the Tsar abdicated on 15 March 1917, Ouspensky became alarmed and urged his colleagues to flee the country. Gurdjieff, already at Alexandropol, invited them to join him. They all finally convened at

Essentuki but did not stay united. Aware of the dangers of the encroaching civil war, Gurdjieff departed with his veteran pupils, but then inexplicably dismissed them. Ouspensky, who felt that Gurdjieff was losing focus on the Work, stayed in Essentuki along with Sophia and her daughter, who was now married and had two daughters of her own. The war forced the Ouspensky household to wander, almost destitute, although Orage provided help by commissioning Ouspensky to write commentaries for *New Age* about life in wartime Russia. Eventually the family settled in Constantinople; Ouspensky taught mathematics. Gurdjieff soon reappeared, and Ouspensky began to help him to organise the long anticipated institute. But in the summer of 1921, Gurdjieff again postponed the project and moved to Germany.

Tertium Organum had been revised and republished in Petrograd in 1916. This second edition came to the attention of Claude Bragdon, an American architect and designer. His interest in geometry and spatial relationships had led him to speculate on the fourth dimension and to write about it in booklets that he printed at Manas Press, his own printing house in Rochester, New York.²⁵ Like Ouspensky, Bragdon thought that the fourth dimension had been revealed to mystics. He and a friend, Nicholas Bessaraboff, made an English translation of *Tertium Organum* and printed it in a limited edition (Rochester, New York, 1920).²⁶ Bragdon had not met Ouspensky and had no idea where he lived, but wished to send him royalties for the successful publication. He inquired of Orage and Theosophists in London; they located Ouspensky in Constantinople, and he thus received a windfall. Bragdon's publication of *Tertium Organum* brought Ouspensky to the attention of Lady Rothermere, a patroness of occultists: she invited him to teach in England. He arrived in August 1921 and began expounding Gurdjieff's teachings, first in Bloomsbury, then in St John's Wood and eventually in South Kensington.

Gurdjieff visited Ouspensky in London, but relations were strained, as Ouspensky was constantly attempting to bring some organisation to their ideas, and, unlike Gurdjieff, referred to the teaching as a 'System'. On one occasion, Gurdjieff shocked and dismayed Ouspensky's students by claiming that their leader was too intellectual and poorly prepared for the Work. At one of Ouspensky's public meetings, A.E. Waite was in the audience and grew impatient with the dry speculations. He stalked out, saying, 'Mr Ouspensky, there is no love in your system.'²⁷ A British

mystic, Millar Denning, condemned the System as evil; he found several allies, including J.W.N. Sullivan, a former friend of Aleister Crowley's. Some of Ouspensky's supporters, such as Orage, allied themselves more closely with Gurdjieff, who was at last establishing his Institute in France. He rented 'the Priory', i.e. the Prieuré des Basses Loges, a château near Fountainbleau. Sophia and her daughter, still considering themselves the pupils of Gurdjieff, stayed close to him.

In 1927 Ouspensky began to edit his pre-war essays on metaphysics; they were translated into English and published as *A New Model of the Universe* (London and New York, 1931). The book brought him renewed fame and new pupils. It includes Ouspensky's improved understanding of the Tarot: he has restored the Hierophant and the Chariot to their usual positions, and has accordingly rewritten their 'pen pictures', and others too.²⁸ Strength now is in the eleventh place, 'Truth' in the eighth: there is less dependence on Waite. For the Juggler and the Sun, Wirth's more traditional versions have deposed Waite's. Wirth is quoted more extensively, not on the Tarot, but on the general subject of symbolism.

In the 1930s Sophia began to assist Ouspensky as his housekeeper. The two followed Gurdjieff's example and set up a school at a series of estates; the pupils served as the maintenance staff. In 1935 the school was installed at Lyne Place in Virginia Water, near Ascot in Surrey. An entire farm was operated by Ouspensky's students. Some were boarders in the large Regency house, some stayed only at weekends and some visited from nearby homes. Life for the students was austere, although they enjoyed occasional festivities: Ouspensky was fond of feasting and excessively fond of drinking. In the late 1930s Sophia became afflicted with 'neurasthenia' and retreated to her room. From there she ruled the estate – and Ouspensky.

During the 1940s the couple extended their organisation to the USA, where they were welcomed by Bragdon and other American fans. (For more on Bragdon, see [Chapter 16](#).) A school and group residence was opened at Franklin Farms in Mendham, New Jersey. Ouspensky delivered talks in New York and kept an apartment there. He was, however, increasingly despondent, disillusioned with his work and dependent on alcohol. He gave his last New York lecture in 1946.

He returned to England at the start of 1947, suffering from kidney failure. He offered lectures only infrequently. When asked if he was

abandoning his cherished System, he bewildered his audience by saying, 'There is no System'. In the autumn of 1947, he announced that he was going to return to America; but when he arrived at the ship, which was departing from Southampton, he refused to board. He spoke of Eternal Recurrence, and implied that he wished to remember the events of his life so that he could control them when he repeated the cycle after death. Accordingly, he asked to be conveyed to familiar sites, where he memorised their details. He died at Lyne Place on 2 October 1947. Sophia Grigorieva, working from transcripts of Ouspensky's lectures, along with his own notes and rough drafts, published several books in his name: *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution* (New York and London, 1950), *In Search of the Miraculous* (New York, 1949; London, 1950) and *The Fourth Way* (New York and London, 1957).

As the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky movements have developed, they usually include study of the Cabala among their teachings and this is often linked with a deep study of Tarot (Ouspensky's book on Tarot is still widely available).²⁹ However, Gurdjieff himself did not teach about the Tarot, nor did Ouspensky interpret it in light of 'the Work'. Ouspensky did, however, view seven trumps as charting 'the path of Man', and believed that they show the 'seven I's of man coexisting in him'. Although this looks like Gurdjieff's idea of the divided self, the passage had already appeared in Ouspensky's Tarot book of 1912, before he met Gurdjieff. Did Ouspensky, in constructing his System, impose his own theories on Gurdjieff's loose teachings? We offer the question to other enquirers.³⁰

Ouspensky's Tarotism can be found in *The Land of Light* (Pomeroy, Washington, 1959) and *Ancient Tarot Symbolism Revealed* (Lakemont, Georgia, 1969), both by Hilton Hotema (Dr George R. Clements). He says, 'Ouspensky is the only one who seems to have discovered that it is feasible to arrange the Major Arcana in certain pairs, as they must have been in the Egyptian Temple of Initiation ...'³¹ 'Diligent research' spanning 65 years did not enable Hotema to discover that Ouspensky's approach descends from Wirth's essay in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. Hotema quotes Ouspensky's visionary 'pen pictures'. Hotema's 1959 book illustrates the entire Waite/Smith tarot. (For more on reprints of that pack, see [Chapter 21](#).)

Hotema claims that Ancient Masters, whom he does not identify, invented the Arcana, along with astrology and the Bible. The movement

survived down to Roman Egypt, but the Masters were then butchered by the Christians, who also burned the school's libraries and distorted its Scriptures. Despite this purported antiquity, however, Hotema pirates only modern Tarots to illustrate his Arcana. The Bible, including the story of Christ, should be interpreted symbolically. (Hotema seizes every opportunity to defame Christianity. His own religion is Neoplatonic: he defends reincarnation, the divinity of the psyche and the hermaphroditism of the first humans.) Like other Neoplatonists, Hotema counterchanges the terms 'birth' and 'death': the soul is dead in the visible (physical) body, and alive after delivery into the invisible (spiritual) realm. Despite this optimism about the afterlife, Hotema's 1969 book includes chapters on how mortal life can be prolonged, namely by avoiding both pleasurable dining and sexual relations.

Valentin Tomberg

Valentin Tomberg was born in St Petersburg on 27 February 1900. His parents, of Baltic German extraction, taught him their Lutheran faith. While still an adolescent, he was drawn to Theosophy and the mystical aspects of Russian Orthodoxy and attracted to the visionary teachings of Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900), who helped to revive the Orthodox reverence for Sophia, the hypostasis of Holy Wisdom. Tomberg knew Shmakov's Tarot book, and in 1920 he encountered some members of Mebes' group. They befriended him and tutored him in Mebes' use of the Tarot as an encyclopedic system of occultism.^{[32](#)}

During the Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent civil war (1917-23) Tomberg's mother was fatally shot by marauders as she ventured into the streets. Valentin fled with his father and elder brother to Reval (modern Tallinn) in Estonia. He worked sporadically as a farmer, apothecary and teacher. In 1924 he gained steady employment with the Estonian postal service and began to study comparative religion and languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, English, Dutch and German) at Tatu University.

In 1925 Tomberg joined the Anthroposophical Society founded by Rudolph Steiner (1861-1925); Otto Sepp was the Secretary General of the Estonian branch. By 1930 Tomberg was promoting Anthroposophy through lectures and essays, and the Society named him to succeed Sepp when the latter died in 1931. Steiner had specified 1933 as the year of Christ's Second Coming, which would occur in the 'etheric realm'. Believers

would then be able to advance their spiritual growth by immediate revelations from the 'Christ-Being'. Tomberg clung to this belief. His series of essays, *Anthroposophical Studies of the Old Testament*, was privately printed in 1933. Tomberg was encouraged in his spiritual aspirations by his wife, Marie Demski, a French-Polish woman who had lived in Russia. They met during their mutual exile in Estonia. Their only child, a son named Alexis, was born in 1933.

Immediately before the Second World War, Tomberg was invited to address Anthroposophist groups in Swanik, Bangor and Rotterdam.³³ During the war years, however, his story becomes confused. He was forced to resign from the Anthroposophical Society. But was the expulsion because he was elevating himself over Rudolph Steiner, or because he was elevating Christianity over Anthroposophy? He moved to Amsterdam, where some say he was pursued by Nazis. He can next be traced to Cologne, either having been taken there by the Nazis, or having been spirited there to escape the Nazis (or to escape the Allied offensive against the Nazis in Holland). By the end of the war, he was either in a refugee camp or studying the law at the University of Cologne while Allied bombs fell on that city. We can say with certainty that he had left Holland for Germany, and that he had left Anthroposophy for Roman Catholicism.

Tomberg no longer desired a public role. In 1948 friends in England persuaded him to work as a translator at the BBC; based in Reading, he helped to monitor Soviet broadcasts. He retired at the first practical opportunity, in 1960, to write and study, and lived in seclusion with his wife and son. He died on the island of Majorca on 24 February 1973. Marie Demski Tomberg died not long after. His unfinished book, *Covenant of the Heart*, was posthumously printed.³⁴ It includes discussions of Christ's miracles, the Ten Commandments, and the Cabalistic Name of God.

Tomberg wrote *Meditations on the Tarot, a Journey into Christian Hermeticism* (Warwick, New York, 1985).³⁵ It was published anonymously and posthumously, as he had requested. The book uses the Tarot de Marseille as a pretext for teaching Tomberg's theosophy, which he says is a living tradition, namely the esoteric church of St John (the 'heart' of the Church), as distinct from the exoteric church of St Peter (the 'head' of the Church). According to Tomberg, Hermeticism is not a sect or a school, but a mystical predisposition, which he hopes already connects him to his

readers. Their shared destiny is to nurture esoteric Christianity until the Second Coming of Christ is complete. The book is primarily inspirational and exhortatory. Tomberg is sympathetic to non-Christian mysticism, notably yoga, Sufism and Cabalism. He avoids Rosicrucianism, perhaps because one of its seminal manifestos – the *Confessio* – is hostile to Catholicism. He slights all Protestant faiths, and ignores Swedenborg. He condemns dualism, whether Zoroastrian, Manichaeian or Gnostic. Each of the Tarot trumps, from *le Bateleur* to *le Monde*, occasions a ‘letter’ to the ‘dear Unknown Reader’. The Fool (*le Mat*) is discussed in the twenty-first position, immediately before *le Monde*, still using the placement established by Lévi. The French magus is sometimes cited, along with other occultists, in a wide range of mystics, theologians, philosophers and scholars. In his meditation on the Death card, Tomberg includes favourable remarks about Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. *Meditations on the Tarot* has been well received by Tarotists: it is praised by Antoine Faivre, the noted French historian of esoterism: ‘There is perhaps no better introduction to Christian theosophy, to occultism, to any reflection on esoterism than this magisterial work, not that of a historian but of an inspired theosopher – a rather rare occurrence – one who is careful to respect history’.³⁶

Mouni Sadhu

Mouni Sadhu was born in Russia shortly before 1900. His ancestry was German (through his mother, née von Ingelström) and Polish (through his father, whose surname was Sudowski). Sadhu's given Christian name was a variation on Demetrius (he sometimes used Demetriusz, sometimes Dymitr). The family was Catholic. Mme Sudowski also explored Theosophy, but her son ignored it. During his childhood his studies, hobbies and sports were unexceptional. His formal schooling was interrupted by the First World War and when he was 19 he became a cadet in the White Army. His mother, worried about his destiny, requested a prophecy from a local visionary, a bishop, who assured her that Dymitr would survive combat. He was dispatched to the front lines, but indeed escaped unharmed. Upon the collapse of the White Army, he escaped to Poland, where he joined the Polish army and served as a lieutenant, almost certainly fighting in the Polish-Soviet War (1920-21).

In his mid-twenties Sudowski began working at the post office in Warsaw. He approached the Polish Theosophical Society, which was then being led by Wanda Dynowska, a prominent scholar acquainted with the sacred scriptures of India. He also wrote to Annie Besant, Mme Blavatsky's disciple and successor, inquiring about the reality of Mme Blavatsky's mystic Masters. Annie Besant asserted their existence, and further claimed that the Masters had resumed communication with Theosophists in 1925. But Sudowski was oddly unmoved by Theosophy at that time. He formed his own occult circle, still intending to combine the metaphysics of East and West.

Sudowski was especially attracted to the Tarot: he was fond of mathematics and this drew him to numerological interpretations of the trumps. He shared his ideas and insights in public meetings, the success of which he found gratifying. In 1928 he wrote a series of Tarot articles for the monthly *Odrodzenie (Revival)*, under the editorship of the same Jozef Chobot who had issued *Tajemna Wiedza Duchowa* in Cieszyn in 1921.³⁷ It was undoubtedly through this source that Sudowski absorbed the 1912 lessons of G.O. Mebes. He in later life incorrectly stated that Mebes' work was never published. Sudowski reported a different line of transmission: one of Mebes' students, when fleeing Russia in about 1919, carried notes from the professor's lectures; the refugee met Sudowski and his associates, and they purchased the 'large sheets of thick paper (about 12" x 15")', with all the diagrams by the author's own experienced hand'.³⁸

Sudowski's study of Tarotism led him to investigate the Cabala and practical magic. He read Stanislas de Guaita's works, including 'a unique and rare volume' that treated of necromancy, astral projection and hallucinogens.³⁹ Sudowski and three friends wished to conjure spirits, and conducted a ritual in a ruined castle where they had accumulated all the magical paraphernalia prescribed by Lévi and Papus; the ambiguous results discouraged Sudowski from trying further evocations, however. He became a member of several esoteric societies whose identities he never revealed in print. In about 1930 he and a fellow initiate sought to interview the aged Dr Czelaw Czynski, a noted hypnotist and occultist in Warsaw. He had retired and withdrawn from the Martinist Order. He continued working as a chiromancer, but Sudowski and his colleague were not interested in palmistry: they made an appointment with Czynski in hopes of learning about 'exteriorization of the astrosome' (astral projection).

That they wished to learn about this subject (Czynski refused to discuss it) indicates Sudowski's continuing interest in Mebes' occultism.⁴⁰ In 1935 Sudowski visited Paris and the headquarters of the Amitiés Spirituelles, which had been founded by Paul Sédir (1871-1926), where he received secret instruction from one of Sédir's followers.

After Hitler invaded Poland, Sudowski became a Nazi collaborator. It is said that he took no action against his Polish friends, even those whom he could have exposed as members of the resistance movement. He lost contact with many of his fellow initiates: during the war, occult groups in Europe generally suspended their activities, or simply disbanded. In this period, Sudowski used the Christian name of Mieczyslaw. After the war he eluded the advancing Soviets, and lived briefly in Germany.

In about 1945 one of Sudowski's mentors, probably Wanda Dynowska, insisted that he read Paul Brunton's *A Search in Secret India* (London, 1934), in which Brunton describes a visit he made to Sri Ramana Maharshi, a respected guru and a published author, whose disciples had also published transcripts of his lessons. Ramana's instructions on yoga enabled Sudowski to control his concentration, respiration and balance, but he could not quiet his intellect.

In about 1946 Sudowski was invited by a Catholic priest to visit his monastery in Paris. He gratefully agreed, and spent months in meditation and study of *Imitatio Christi* (*The Imitation of Christ*) by Thomas à Kempis. Sudowski also sought spiritual counsel at the Ramakrishna Mission, where a swami alerted him to a group of Ramana Maharshi's followers in Paris. They, in turn, shared information about a Brazilian ashram called Arunachala (Hill of Light), named after the sacred landmark that loomed above Ramana's own ashram near Tiruvannamalai in south India. Sudowski decided to visit both schools.

He sailed to São Paulo and proceeded south to the ashram at Curitiba. While there, he wrote a small book comparing *Imitatio Christi* and *Viveka Chudamani* (*The Great Crest Jewel of Wisdom*, Charles Johnston, trans., New York, 1925). Sudowski's booklet, published in Portuguese, was printed in 1948. He persisted with yoga, which now fulfilled his hope for mental quietude, until he felt worthy to meet Sri Ramana.

Sudowski must have headed eastward from Brazil: early in 1949 he visited Gurdjieff in Paris. The encounter went badly, according to Nicholas Tereshchenko.⁴¹ Gurdjieff immediately insulted Sudowski 'in his mother

tongue'. Sudowski walked out in disgust and anger, telling Gurdjieff, 'To hell with you, you filthy Armenian old man.' Tereshchenko suggests that Sudowski should have bowed down to Gurdjieff, for only a supreme master could instantly recognise a new visitor's native language and choose a curse so very offensive to him!⁴² But Tereshchenko might rather have assumed that Sudowski's origins were known to the host in advance, or that Gurdjieff, quite fluent in Russian, automatically used it for expletives. In any case, Sudowski, who usually valued most schools of spirituality, was forever alienated from Gurdjieff and his Fourth Way.

In April 1949, Sudowski arrived in Tiruvannamalai, and settled into Sri Ramana's nearby ashram. During the next six months he found Ramana to be a great comfort and inspiration. The sage was approaching 70, and he was afflicted with a cancer on his arm, which required radical treatment, but despite his suffering, he maintained his belief that the true self exists quite apart from physical manifestations. Both the body and the cosmos are illusions, incidental to the unseen Divinity that permeates everything. Of course, this same credo has been widely taught, for example by the famous Sri Aurobindo, who presided over an ashram at Pondicherry. This school further sought to integrate Eastern and Western mysticism. Sudowski visited Pondicherry, and joined a shuffling crowd that was permitted to pass by Aurobindo as he meditated. The practical business of the ashram was conducted by 'the Mother', whose real name was Mirra Alfassa. Before finding her niche in India, she had lived in Algeria, where she studied occultism with the elusive Theon (see [Chapter 3](#)). Sudowski seems to have been unimpressed with the ashram at Pondicherry; he returned to Ramana's more modest establishment. In October 1949 he departed India for Australia to settle near Melbourne. In April 1950 he received the news of Ramana's death. The pupil used his diary from India to write about Ramana in a heartfelt tribute, *In Days of Great Peace* (Bangalore, 1952; London, 1957), published under the pen name Mouni Sadhu.

While residing in a suburb of Melbourne called Box Hill, Sadhu wrote other books including *Ways to Self-Realization* (London, 1963). Its Chapter XLIII is 'The Egyptian Tarot'. Sadhu's Egyptology does not extend beyond the 'Tarotists' myth that Pharaoh's priests cleverly concealed their wisdom in a pack of playing cards as one of the least likely and most enduring vehicles. In discussing the Tarot, Sadhu discloses no

Egyptian lore, but depends on Pythagorean numerology and Jewish Cabalism.

While working on his yoga books, Sadhu also prepared *The Tarot: A Contemporary Course of the Quintessence of Hermetic Occultism* (London, 1962; Hollywood, 1967). He cites 'Gregory Ossipowitch Mebes' as the originator of the 'course'. In fact, Sadhu's book is virtually a translation of Mebes' lessons. Here again are the old digressions, associating the Tetra-grammaton with Arcanum IV, the planets with Arcanum VII and the *sephiroth* with Arcanum X. Sadhu has omitted the professor's instructions on demonic evocation, and has added a few asides about yoga and Hindu concepts. And with his interest in mathematical precision, Sadhu perhaps amplified the original arithmology. There are 232 arithmetical interpretations of the Arcana, scattered through 101 lessons. The last equation is: $22 = 11 + 11$. This yields an injunction: 'Oppose the Force (11) against the Force (11) in yourself and in others ... Then you will see the Astral Serpent, now harmless for you, although encircling you with its regular oval.' The serpent appears in Sadhu's World card, as in Etteilla's Tarot, Goulinat's Tarot and the anonymous Tarot in *Kniga Germiesa*. Sadhu, however, is more explicit about the symbolism of the serpent enveloping this illusory world. Éliphas Lévi, in Chapter XXII of his *Dogme*, links the World to the Astral Light; this he elsewhere envisions as a serpent.

The Tarot is illustrated by Eva G. Lucas, a friend of Sadhu's in Melbourne. When she drew the 22 Arcana, she presumably adhered to drawings or descriptions preserved from Mebes' lectures.⁴³ Her choices of models (from the Tarots by Oswald Wirth and by Pamela Colman Smith) correspond to the choices made by the illustrator of *Tajemna Wiedza Duchowa*. Lucas' drawings have generous margins containing Hebrew letters, Roman numerals, Latin terms for basic themes and English names for the cards' subjects. The general format can be seen in the highest Arcanum. It is marked at the top with the Hebrew character for *Tau*. Beneath this, in successive rows, are: 'Arcanum XXII / CORONA MAGICA / THE WORLD'. In the left margin is the circular glyph for the sun and the Latin 'Sol'. At the bottom, in three rows, are: 'Absolutum / Adaptatio Operis Magni / Omnipotentia Naturalis'.⁴⁴ From this sample, the reader may deduce that the attributions and correspondences are ultimately those devised by Lévi and embellished by Christian and Papus.

The Latin notations are to be found among those given by Shmakov, and suggest that he and Sadhu are following a mutual source, namely G.O. Mebes.

Mouni Sadhu formed 'The Arunachala Group', which comprised a few friends wishing to follow Ramana's example. Once a month, as advertised, they admitted the public to meetings at Sadhu's house in Box Hill. Any participants could conduct the meetings, but Sadhu usually attended, and gave instruction when asked.

Each February Sadhu drove to Sydney, where he addressed the Theosophical Society and other groups. In 1964 Sadhu asked Tereshchenko, who was living in Sydney, to help start a 'Tarot Group' there. From week to week, a different member presented some personal insight into the Tarot.

Mouni Sadhu's groups were still active when he died in Melbourne, late in 1966 or early in 1967. He seems to have left no progeny. His relationships with women were numerous but usually transitory. In his last days, he had a female companion (perhaps not legally a wife).

Tereshchenko recalled certain ideas from the Tarot Group when, from 1974 to 1978, he wrote 24 articles for *Cosmos*, a monthly magazine based in Sydney. The essays use the Tarot trumps as springboards to discuss various occult philosophies, thus offering yet another example of the pedagogical methods of G.O. Mebes.

PART V

DIFFERENT SCHOOLS, DIFFERENT RULES

CHAPTER 14

C.C. Zain and the Church of Light

Comte C. de Saint-Germain and *Practical Astrology*

‘Comte C. de Saint-Germain’ was the assumed name of Edgar de Valcourt-Vermont, a scholar of and author of books on palmistry and hypnotism. He published *Practical Astrology* (Chicago) in 1901 under the same pseudonym.¹ Saint-Germain's system of astrological truths borrows heavily from Paul Christian, probably with Ély Star as intermediary.² Saint-Germain refers on an early page (p. 18) to ‘the use of the “arcanes”, a marvellous inheritance from the ancient wizards in the shape of seventy-eight mysterious “tarots”’; throughout the book, he always uses the word in its French form ‘arcanes’. Having expatiated on the planets, the zodiac, the twelve houses and the 36 decans, he devotes the penultimate Chapter XII, which occupies nearly half the book, to the arcanes. Like Ély Star (but not Paul Christian), Saint-Germain distinguishes between the major and the minor arcanes. His names for the major arcanes are mostly English renderings of Christian's.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| I | The Magus |
| II | The Gate of the Sanctuary |
| III | Iris-Urania [sic] |
| IV | The Cubic Stone |
| V | The Master of the Arcanes |
| VI | The Two Ways |
| VII | The Chariot of Osiris |
| VIII | The Balance and the Sword |
| IX | The Veiled Lamp |
| X | The Sphinx |
| XI | The Tamed Lion |
| XII | The Sacrifice |
| XIII | The Reaping Skeleton |
| XIV | The Two Urns |
| XV | Typhon |

- XVI** The Thunder-struck Tower
- XVII** The Star of the Magi
- XVIII** The Twilight
- XIX** The Dazzling Light
- XX** The Rising of the Dead
- XXI** The Crown of the Magi
- XXII** The Crocodile

Christian's 'Isis-Urania' has a new identity, probably by mistake. 'The Lightning-Struck Tower' oddly becomes 'Thunder-struck'.³

After explaining how the arcanes are to be used in casting a horoscope, Saint-Germain gives a table of the major arcanes, with their numerical values, associated planets and zodiacal signs and principal divinatory meanings. There follow fatidic circles of the seven planets and of the Rose-Cross. The 78 arcanes are then illustrated and explained in detail.⁴ The major arcanes reproduce exactly those that Maurice-Otto Wegener designed as illustrations in René Falconnier's *Les XXII lames hermétiques du Tarot divinatoire* (*The XXII Hermetic Plates of the Divinatory Tarot*, Paris 1896).⁵ Saint-Germain was the first to copy the French source, although he gives no acknowledgement.

The minor arcanes appear to be of Saint-Germain's devising. They are numbered from XXIII to LXXVIII, as Ély Star had them; but the suits are called Scepters, Cups, Swords and Pentacles. Saint-Germain explains the term 'pentacle' as meaning 'a coin worn as a charm'. On the cards, these coins sometimes surround five-point stars or are framed by such stars. In the other suits, the suit-signs are disposed to imply geometrical shapes. The court figures, called Masters, Mistresses, Warriors and Slaves, suggest ancient cultures – Assyrian (?), Minoan (?), Greek and Egyptian, respectively.

Saint-Germain's book thus supplies designs for a complete Tarot pack; just such an uncoloured pack was produced in 1980 by A.G. Müller of Switzerland, and distributed by US Games Systems, Inc.⁶ The only deviation from Saint-Germain's illustrations occurs at the foot of each of the 78 cards: its name, still obedient to Saint-Germain, and a Roman numeral giving its position in the sequential ordering. Accompanying the pack is a booklet by Stuart Kaplan, which reproduces much of Saint-Germain's text.

Williams/Benjamin/Zain

Benjamin P. Williams was a Sagittarian, born on 12 December 1882. His parents were Emma (née Greene) and Dr William J. Williams, a physician and a deacon in the Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ) in Adel, Iowa. As a child, Benjamin was greatly interested in nature and enjoyed exploring the forest and observing wildlife. At high school he learned about scientific method and was impressed with its values of objectivity and persistence. In the autumn of 1898, he watched an itinerant performer use hypnotism and decided to examine the phenomenon for himself. During the ensuing school year, he ordered books on the subject and applied his new skill to classmates. He asked impartial adults to witness the results. He became convinced that the apparent effects of hypnosis were genuine. By the following summer, however, he had abandoned his experiments, concerned that hypnotism could subvert free will. He planned to become a naturalist, and took appropriate classes at Iowa State University. Conservationism became a lifelong concern.

Hypnotism awakened Williams's interest in occultism, which was not approved by his relatives. In order to avoid embarrassing them, he changed his name to Elbert Benjamin. He was married by the age of 18, if not earlier.⁷ As he had systematically studied hypnotism and the natural sciences, so he approached astrology. He did not expect to validate it, but he was surprised by the accuracy of the horoscopes that he cast for friends and relatives. In seeking a theoretical basis for it, he encountered *The Light of Egypt* by 'Zanoni'. He learned that the author's real name was T.H. Burgoyne, a medium who had helped to found a secret society, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor. Although Burgoyne had died, the Brotherhood was said to survive in the American West. (It will be recalled that Burgoyne had patrons living in Denver, Colorado.) In the spring of 1909, Benjamin had reached Denver and managed to locate a lodge of the External Circle of the H.B. of L. He was admitted to a meeting, and a seer named Mrs Anderson gave him a surprising message: the Interior Circle (comprised of spiritual beings) desired that he transcribe their further teachings. Benjamin refused to commit himself to the task, but in the spring of 1910 he received his own mental directive from the Interior Circle, identified as the Brotherhood of Light. He now agreed to the role of transcriber, following the example of Burgoyne. The latter's term for

astrology, 'the language of the stars', became Benjamine's 'religion of the stars'.

Benjamine's new calling may have caused conflict within his marriage: the Brotherhood required that spouses should join the order together; but Mrs Benjamine declined.⁸ The couple, already the parents of two sons, decided to divorce.

Benjamine settled in Los Angeles in May 1915. He set up secret meetings for the Brotherhood and began working on the lessons, which were supposedly transmitted to him from the Interior Circle. There were to be seven courses of lessons on each of three subjects – astrology, alchemy and magic. Each course was to comprise several lessons, making 210 lessons altogether. He supported himself by various stints as a fisherman, a cowboy and a lumberjack.

In 1916 Benjamine married Elizabeth Dorris. The couple resolved to devote all possible resources to the *Brotherhood of Light Lessons*. Benjamine decided to write these under the name C.C. Zain – other books, which he wrote as Elbert Benjamine, helped to pay for publishing the lessons. He chose the new name partly because the Hebrew letter *Zain*, in his estimation, corresponded to his sun sign, Sagittarius. He also found positive meanings in the numerological values of the four letters in the word 'Zain'.⁹ The Brotherhood became a public organisation on 11 November 1918 and issued its own set of black and white Tarot cards. The Major Arcana and the court cards were taken from the *Practical Astrology* of Saint-Germain, and were thus the Falconnier/Wegener designs. The Minor Arcana, on the other hand, were not numbered consecutively, and had no resemblance to Saint-Germain's illustrations. Zain delivered two lectures every week and produced a book every year. The classroom was located in downtown Los Angeles. The Benjamins' home was an unpretentious house at 2341 Coral Street, with a hilltop view of the city. From this address, the couple dispatched the Brotherhood lessons by mail. Correspondents could eventually complete all 21 'degrees' and receive a 'Hermetician's Certificate'. Beyond this lay the option of 29 'Lucidic degrees'.

Zain espoused Paul Christian's myth about the Egyptian use of the Major Arcana as murals in a hall for initiatory rites.¹⁰ Christian had retailed this myth in a long section of his *Histoire de la magie* which he purported to have extracted from Iamblichus's *On the Mysteries*; however, nothing of the

kind is to be found in Iamblichus's book. As well as these Egyptian origins, Zain wanted to preserve Jewish Cabalism in the Tarot. He wished, however, to revise the structure of the Tree of Life by interchanging the positions of *Netzach* and *Hod*, though still numbering them respectively 7 and 8: *Netzach* was to be on the left-hand pillar and *Hod* on the right-hand one.¹¹ In *Astrological Signatures*, Zain asserts that the Ark of the Covenant was 'a synthetic representation' of the Book of Thoth.¹² Three levels of the Ark corresponded to the Tarot's triad of numeral cards, court cards and trumps. Within the Ark were the golden pot, Aaron's rod, the tablets of the Covenant and the flakes of manna; these corresponded to the Tarot's Cups, Scepters, Swords and Coins, respectively. Unfortunately for Zain's theory, the correspondences had no ancient authority but were invented by Éliphas Lévi.¹³

In 1927 Zain published a book entitled *The Sacred Tarot*, comprising the Brotherhood's lessons 22-33, originally issued in 1918; these formed its course on the Tarot, the first of the courses on Magic. One of the first plates depicts a snake transfixed by an arrow, an emblem used by Burgoyne, in the tradition of Cagliostro.¹⁴ Here the device is apparently the astrological 'dragon' (the Moon's sinuous course), surrounded by seven stars. Other plates depict the Brotherhood Tarot.

In 1932 the Benjamines learned that Los Angeles County planned to ban the teaching and practice of astrology. The Brotherhood therefore reorganised as a church, protected under the federal Constitution. The Church of Light was incorporated on 2 November 1932; its faith, of course, was the 'religion of the stars'. In the same year, the founder received a sizeable inheritance from his mother.

In 1936 a new edition of *The Sacred Tarot* appeared, with lesson 48, on the 'Doctrine of Kabbalism', added. The trumps and court cards were redrawn under Zain's direction by Gloria Beresford, a member of the Church of Light (see plate 5b). The trumps still did not diverge greatly from those provided by Falconnier.

The numeral cards remained as in the edition of 1918. In the top left corner of each suit card is a numeral or letter for its rank (1 for Ace; K, Q, J, H for the court figures – H standing for Horseman and ranking below the Jack). In the top right corner is a symbol or pair of symbols for signs of the zodiac, except on the 10s and Horsemen, which have an emblem for a Cherub (as one of St John's 'living creatures'). Here the Cherubim stand for

the fixed signs of the zodiac (bull for Taurus, lion for Leo, eagle for Scorpio and man for Aquarius). At the bottom left of the cards from 1 to 9 in each suit is a planetary symbol; on the 10s, an emblem for a Cherub; and on the court cards, a French suit-sign (Diamonds in Coins, Clubs in Scepters, Hearts in Cups and Spades in Swords). At bottom right of each suit card is a small symbol of the actual (Latin) suit. The suit-signs are fancifully explained as symbols for seasons (Diamonds/Coins for the prosperity of spring, Clubs/Scepters for the clover and wood that grow in summer, Hearts/Cups for the festivities of harvest time, Spades/Swords for the toil and strife of winter). We are later told, however, that the suit-signs symbolise elements. This helps to explain the zodiacal signs on the numeral cards: Claudius Ptolemy, in the II century, had distributed the four elements through the twelve signs. In Zain's Tarot, fire governs the Scepters, water the Cups, air the Coins and earth the Swords. In effect, the numeral cards (minus the 10s) are another expression of the 36 decans. Christian had used an ancient system by which a planetary cycle ruled the decans; Zain differentiated them by superimposing on the zodiac a secondary cycle of signs so that each ten-degree span comes under a unique influence or combination of influences. This is unusual, but not unprecedented, in astrology.^{[15](#)}

Ranks	Scepters	Cups	Coins	Swords
Ace	Aries-Aries	Cancer-Cancer	Libra-Libra	Capricorn-Capricorn
2	Aries-Leo	Cancer-Scorpio	Libra-Aquarius	Capricorn-Taurus
3	Aries-Sagittarius	Cancer-Pisces	Libra-Gemini	Capricorn-Virgo
4	Leo-Leo	Scorpio-Scorpio	Aquarius-Aquarius	Taurus-Taurus
5	Leo-Sagittarius	Scorpio-Pisces	Aquarius-Gemini	Taurus-Virgo
6	Leo-Aries	Scorpio-Cancer	Aquarius-Libra	Taurus-Capricorn
7	Sagittarius-Sagittarius	Pisces-Pisces	Gemini-Gemini	Virgo-Virgo
8	Sagittarius-Aries	Pisces-Cancer	Gemini-Libra	Virgo-Capricorn
9	Sagittarius-Leo	Pisces-Scorpio	Gemini-Aquarius	Virgo-Taurus
10	Leo [fire]	Scorpio [water]	Aquarius [air]	Taurus [earth]

The suit-signs are given an Egyptian aspect: the Swords are scimitars; the Coins battered discs; the Cups have lotus calyxes, the Scepters the head of Set, a god of ancient Egypt. On the numeral cards, the geometric disposition of suit-signs recalls those of Saint-Germain. Within the frames of the suit cards, there are many constellations. A few appear on the trumps.

At the bottom of each Major Arcanum, Zain places a Hebrew letter, its equivalent in Roman letters, and a letter from the Alphabet of the Magi.

(This last still conforms to the script as given by Paul Christian.) Each trump has at the top both an Arabic and a Roman numeral for the number, with a planetary or zodiacal symbol. Zain complains that ‘in many Christian (Tarot) packs’ Arcana 8 and 11 have their numbers interchanged, and explains this on the ground that the justice of the Christian God is not even-handed and must therefore be associated with an odd number. This is somewhat ironic, since the interchange of numbers was due to the Golden Dawn, which included faithful Christians. Zain's sequence of trumps and their correspondences are as follows.

Arcanum	Hebrew value	Magian value	Astrological function
1 The Magus	<i>Aleph</i>	A	Mercury
2 Veiled Isis	<i>Beth</i>	B	Virgo
3 Isis Unveiled	<i>Gimel</i>	G	Libra
4 The Sovereign	<i>Daleth</i>	D	Scorpio
5 The Hierophant	<i>He</i>	E	Jupiter
6 The Two Paths	<i>Vau</i>	V,U,W	Venus
7 The Conqueror	<i>Zain</i>	Z	Sagittarius
8 The Balance	<i>Heth</i>	H,Ch	Capricorn
9 The Sage	<i>Teth</i>	Th	Aquarius
10 The Wheel	<i>Yod</i>	I,J,Y	Uranus
11 The Enchantress	<i>Kaph</i>	C,K	Neptune
12 The Martyr	<i>Lamed</i>	L	Pisces
13 The Reaper	<i>Mem</i>	M	Aries
14 The Alchemist	<i>Nun</i>	N	Taurus
15 The Black Magician	<i>Samekh</i>	X	Saturn
16 The Lightning	<i>Ayin</i>	O	Mars
17 The Star	<i>Pe</i>	P,Ph,F	Gemini
18 The Moon	<i>Tzaddi</i>	Sh,Ts,Tz	Cancer
19 The Sun	<i>Quoph</i>	Q	Leo
20 The Sarcophagus	<i>Resh</i>	R	Moon
21 The Adept	<i>Shin</i>	S	Sun
22 The Materialist	<i>Tau</i>	T	Earth

To the last letter, *Tau*, Zain gave a dual signification, preserving its original assignment to Earth, but adding Pluto, the planet discovered in 1930. In this system, the corresponding Arcanum receives the number 0 and the letter T, written upside down. In its ‘Plutonian’ aspect, the card signifies spirituality. The presence here of Pluto, Neptune and Uranus is surprising, as those planets were of course unknown to the ancient Egyptians.

Like previous Tarotists, Zain found astrological correspondences by mingling zodiacal signs with the planets. When the latter are extracted from Zain's list, the signs will be seen to stand in their natural cycle, albeit beginning with Virgo rather than Aries. The resulting correspondences harmonise with a few traditional associations: Isis, in Arcana 2 and 3, is both the zodiacal Virgin and the goddess of the harvest (weighed in Libra);

the Martyr is strung up by his feet, which are governed by Pisces, according to medical astrology; Cancer receives an appropriately watery card. Among the planets, Mars' card is appropriately fiery. The religious nature of Jupiter and the amorous nature of Venus nicely meet with Arcana 5 and 6 respectively. Such is the elasticity of symbolic systems. *The Sacred Tarot* specifies further associations for each card – colour, musical tone, herb and mineral.

The book describes a variety of divinatory spreads. One of these clearly descends from Burgoyne's formula which placed cards at the four end-points of a cross and at ten points implying a surrounding circle. The cross fulfilled an astrological pattern (the Ascendant, Midheaven, Descendant and Lower Heaven), but the rationale for a group of ten was not explained. Zain reveals this decad as analogous to the ten *sephiroth*. Zain's Major Arcana receive divinatory meanings in terms set down by Paul Christian.

Zain hails his reader as 'son of earth': Paul Christian imagined this as the salutation for initiates within the Egyptian temples. Zain says that Christian translated 'from the original MS' a treatise by Iamblichus entitled 'An Egyptian Initiation'; Zain chooses to recognise Iamblichus as 'an initiate of The Brotherhood of Light'. Zain adds that in 1901 Genevieve Stebbins, his friend, privately circulated her English rendering of Christian's French translation.

The Brotherhood's teachings happened to mesh with certain symbols in the Tarot by Falconnier. For instance, Arcanum XXI has the Hindu *lingam-cum-yoni* winging upward to supernal bliss. This nicely expresses a central teaching of the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: couples can spiritually advance together in this life and in the afterlife. Zain says that this doctrine of 'soul-mates' is taught in the *Zohar*. In fact, the H.B. of L. received the doctrine from P.B. Randolph, who received it from writings by Andrew Jackson Davis and by Emmanuel Swedenborg.

On a more practical level, Zain borrowed from the H.B. of L. its concept of teaching through the mail. His standards for application, however, were probably far less stringent. Initiates were no longer the chosen few, but potentially all who could afford and understand the correspondence courses.

Elizabeth Benjamine died on 29 March 1942. On 31 May 1943, Elbert Benjamine married Maria Major, alienating Will P. Benjamine, one of Elbert's sons by his first marriage. Will had moved to Los Angeles and worked for the Church of Light. He now tried to assume control over it: the church board responded by forcing the withdrawal of Will and his wife

Ann. They and their supporters tried to form their own Hermetic church, but the effort was short-lived.¹⁶ In 1949, Elbert and Maria undertook an ambitious missionary tour across the United States. The effort was taxing, and the teacher's health declined. Elbert Benjamine suffered an aneurysm in the brain and died on 18 November 1951. As he had requested, his body was cremated, and his funeral was held privately.

The Church of Light continues with about 1200 members.¹⁷ Volunteers at Benjamine's homestead disseminate the *Brotherhood of Light Tarot* and the *Brotherhood of Light Lessons*. All members can request the correspondence courses. Also available are 21 additional lessons, called Award Manuscripts. The Church still issues the Hermetician's Certificate and offers the optional Lucidic Degrees. The general public can purchase Zain's books and related materials. The Church teaches the importance of astrology, but holds that morality controls our destinies here and hereafter. Death is a doorway that opens onto a plane of greater freedom and power. These tenets are central to Zain's 'religion of the stars'.

Arrows of Light by Dequer

In 1930 John H. Dequer published a book, *Arrows of Light from the Egyptian Tarot* (New York). The title page declares the book to be 'a practical application of the Hermetic System of Names and Numbers, based upon the teaching of the Brotherhood of Light'. For the numbers 1 to 22, Dequer lists the divinatory significance of each corresponding Tarot 'key' (trump), along with a gem or metal, a colour, an astrological function, a phonetic value in English and an equivalent Hebrew letter, all according to Zain's lessons. There are incidental references to A.E. Waite, Manly Hall, Helena Blavatsky, P.B. Randolph, P.D. Ouspensky, Paul Case and Frater Achad, among others. Dequer follows the general principles of numerology, whereby the inquirer can reduce his name and birth date to various numbers with symbolic significance. In this case, the numbers are held to refer to Tarot keys. Also involved is the trump that best symbolises the inquirer's prevailing problem. A comprehensive interpretation purportedly yields a solution. The numbers from 1 to 22 are treated also in separate chapters, each briefly discussing the number in such categories as numerology, psychology, physiology, ailments, natural remedies, astrology, the Bible, Freemasonry and science; a final category, 'Meditation', gives meanings and advice inferred from the corresponding Tarot key.

Dequer attempts to synthesise the trumps with a generalised horoscope chart. Alternating with the traditional twelve houses are twelve ‘gates’, essentially the zodiacal signs, with Aries as the rising sign. Each ‘gate’, in Dequer's opinion, accommodates a Tarot trump, one whose symbolism is presumably allied with the adjacent ‘house’. Dequer follows the names that Zain gave each trump. Interpreting key 21 as ‘the Ego’, he places it at the centre of his chart. Around this key are orbits for (A) Divine Soul, (B) Spiritual Body, (C) Animal Soul, (D) Astral Body, (E) Etheric Body, (F) Physical Body, (G) Environment and (H) Astral Forces. These parenthetical letters have been taken into the following tabulation to show that, according to Dequer, some keys operate only in specific orbits.

House	Tarot Key	Gate	Tarot Key
I Personality	16 The Lightning (C)	Being	13 The Reaper
II Possession	6 The Two Paths (D)	Regeneration	14 The Alchemist
III Thought	1 The Magus (B)	Hope	17 The Star
IV Home	20 The Sarcophagus (A)	Deception	18 The Moon
V Pleasure		Happiness	19 The Sun
VI Labor	1 The Magus (B)	Science	2 The Veiled Isis
VII Marriage		Action	3 Isis Unveiled
VIII Inheritance	16 The Lightning (C)	Realization	4 The Sovereign
IX Philosophy	5 The Hierophant (E)	Victory	7 The Conqueror
X Business	15 The Black Magician (F)	Fallability [sic]	8 Blind Justice
XI Friends	10 The Wheel (G)	Knowledge	9 The Sage
XII Sorrows	11 The Enchantress (H)	Sorrow	12 The Martyr

Was Dequer justified in awarding the Magus and the Lightning two houses apiece, while the other allegories have only one residence? Surely the Death trump is the best personification of House VIII (sometimes given over to mortality and funerals)? And if dual residences are permissible, why have no Tarot figures claimed houses V and VII? Would not the Lovers naturally gravitate to House VII (marriage and partnership)? Dequer has discovered an interesting possibility in relating trumps to horoscope houses, but his effort seems incomplete and hasty.¹⁸

The Royal Road by Fathman

George Fathman in *The Royal Road* (Chicago, 1951) writes an Acknowledgement, dated 1949, saying that he studied for six years with ‘the late Dr. John H. Dequer ... the most learned and profound of all modern Tarot scholars’. Fathman cites the Curtisses, Zain, Ouspensky, Paul Case, Manly Hall, Papus, Wirth, Waite and Mathers as ‘sincere students of the Tarot’. Fathman's book reproduces 22 Arcana, sketched by John Dequer.

According to Fathman, the finished drawings, in black linework, were by Paul Hagerup, and the calligraphy was by Pedro Krause. The set was apparently available as an actual pack of cards.¹⁹ At the top of each card, an Arabic numeral stands above the card's name: 0/22 The Blind Fool; 1 The Prodigal; 2 The Virgin; 3 The Queen; 4 The Prince; 5 The High Priest; 6 The Two Paths; 7 The Conqueror; 8 Blind Justice; 9 The Sage; 10 Wheel of Fate; 11 The Enchantress; 12 The Martyr; 13 The Reaper; 14 The Alchemist; 15 The Devil; 16 The Ruined Tower [although still shown as a lightning-struck pyramid]; 17 The Naked Truth; 18 Illusion; 19 The Reunion; 20 The Awakening; 21 The Redeemed. At the bottom of the cards are the associated phonetic values, given in Roman letters. (Magian and Hebrew are omitted.) The first Arcanum, The Prodigal, is assigned the letter A. The last Arcanum, the Fool, is assigned the letter T. Also at the bottom of each card is the name of a sign of the zodiac or a planet and its symbol: following C.C. Zain are Uranus (Arcanum 10), Neptune (11) and Pluto (0/22). Each of Fathman's chapters describes an associated Arcanum, followed by sections on philosophy, astrology, human anatomy, Masonic ritual, the Bible and an aphorism addressed to the familiar 'son of earth'. Each chapter concludes with a list of brief terms and correspondences: phonetic value, key word, human experience, Bible verses, astrological role, related myth, alchemical stage, associated symbols, Masonic degree, body part, gem and colour. These correspondences are largely indebted to C.C. Zain, whose works go unmentioned.

An Egyptian Initiation

In 1965 in Denver, Edward Leon Bloom privately circulated *An Egyptian Initiation*, stated as being by Iamblichus and translated by Paul Christian.²⁰ It will be recalled that Zain had mentioned a work of this title by Iamblichus, translated into French by Christian and thence into English by Genevieve Stebbins.²¹ She was married to Norman Astley, one of the patrons of Thomas Burgoyne and his H.B. of L. (see [Chapter 3](#)). Her translation, which she completed in 1901, was acquired by Henry Wagner, also an adherent of the H.B. of L. He assisted Bloom, a friend and fellow Denverite, in having the manuscript typed and distributed. Bloom was a Mason and supplied fellow members with Genevieve Stebbins' work. It has an Introduction by Wagner and a Preface by Bloom, who gives his own age as being 71 in 1965.

The narrative begins by giving the sphinx an esoteric interpretation. Some details come not from Paul Christian's writings, but from Éliphas Lévi's: the features of the sphinx – human, bovine, leonine and aquiline – are said to symbolise the abilities to Know, to Will, to Dare and to Keep Silent respectively. The principal text is indeed an English version of the section of Christian's *Histoire de la magie* recounting the alleged initiation conducted by Egyptian 'Magi'. The rites begin beneath the Great Sphinx at Gizeh and proceed under the pyramids and into subterranean galleries. One of the galleries displays the 22 Arcana. A new footnote claims that Thomas Burgoyne taught that the Arcana are the Symbolical Keys of the 'Taro', but that even an entire pack of 78 cards is incomplete: originally there were 29 more esoteric keys and a 'seal of Metron' [sic]. The text follows Christian in describing and deciphering the Arcana, save that it neglects to name the individual images. For instance, Arcanum I has its correspondences with the letter A and with the Magian character Alohim, but is not called 'The Magus'. Gone are Christian's 'Gate of the Sanctuary', 'Isis-Urania' and all his grandiose titles. However, Stebbins or her publisher has provided a Table of Contents that lists all the Arcana in novel terms. The first ten allude to the archetypal decad as understood by Neopythagoreans.

- I** THE ABSOLUTE BEING
- II** CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ABSOLUTE BEING
- III** SUPREME POWER BALANCED BY INTELLIGENCE AND WISDOM
- IV** REALISATION OF VIRTUALITIES AND EFFACIES [sic] OF THE ABSOLUTE BEING
- V** UNIVERSAL LAW – THE REGULATOR
- VI** GOOD AND EVIL
- VII** DOMINATION OF SPIRIT OVER MATTER
- VIII** JUSTICE
- IX** ABSOLUTE WISDOM
- X** PRINCIPLE OF LIFE
- XII** REVEALED LAW – DUTY AND SACRIFICE
- XIII** PERPETUAL MOVEMENT OF CREATION, DESTRUCTION AND RENEWAL
- XIV** PERPETUAL MOVEMENT OF LIFE, MORAL LIFE, FORCES OF NATURE
- XV** PREDESTINATION, MYSTERY, FATALITY
- XVI** CHASTIZEMENT OF PRIDE
- XVII** IMMORTALITY, SPIRITUAL LIGHT, HOPE
- XVIII** THE INFINITE, RULE OF THE INSTINCTS, DECEPTIONS AND ENEMIES
- XIX** SUPREME HEAVEN, SACRED TRUTH, HAPPINESS
- XX** FROM EARTHLY LIFE TO FUTURE LIFE

XXI HIGHEST DEGREE OF INITIATION, EMPIRE OF *LIGHT*, *SANCTIFIED*

XXII PUNISHMENT FOLLOWS ALL SIN

The book ends with an 'Autobiography of Lieutenant Colonel Edward Leon Bloom, United States Air Force Reserve' (pp. 87-100) and 'Aphorisms on love' (pp. 101-5). Also included are plates showing the 22 Arcana, which are actually Oswald Wirth's Tarot trumps from the limited edition of 1889.

***The Tarot-Card Spread Reader* by D.C. Doane and K. Keyes**

In 1944 Doris Chase Doane, a personal friend of Zain, passed the 21 Brotherhood of Light courses and began teaching at the Church of Light in Los Angeles. She and King Keyes wrote *The Tarot-Card Spread Reader* (West Nyack, New York, 1967). It was issued in paperback as *How to Read Tarot Cards* (New York, 1967). The cards are illustrated and are unchanged from Zain's examples, save for rather superfluous names – 'Major Arcanum I', 'Ace of Coins', etc – added in type at the cards' bottom edges. The courts are 'King', 'Queen', 'Youth' and 'Horseman'. Above the Youths appears the old letter J, for Jack. Zain's text is reorganised into three parts: 'Your Tarot Cards and How to Use Them', 'Example Tarot Card Readings', 'Key Phrases for the 78 Tarot Cards'. A fourth section, 'Astrological Symbolism', gives standard information about the influences of zodiacal signs and planets on the human body, temperaments, interests, occupational aptitudes, and so forth. Doris Chase Doane also wrote astrological treatises, which were sold through the Church of Light.

Doane and Keyes improved on Zain's Tarot book by providing a clear structure and an index. These are now features of a new edition of *The Sacred Tarot* (Los Angeles, 1994). The Major Arcana have been redrawn (by Stephanie Chen), but still follow the form and content of the old illustrations.

***The Bible and the Tarot* by Corinne Heline**

Corinne Heline (née Duke) was born 13 August 1882. She was for a time the associate of Max Heindel (1865-1919), an ex-Theosophist who founded the Rosicrucian Fellowship, based at Oceanside, California. There she met Theodore Heline, who was to become her husband and editor. She was eager to maintain the Christian elements in Western occultism. Her book

The Bible and the Tarot (Oceanside, 1969) is illustrated with the 22 Arcana by 'St. Germain'. She ignores their astrological glyphs and Magian letters. She generally follows Saint-Germain in her names for the Arcana, but prefers 'The High Priestess' to 'The Gate of the Sanctuary', 'The Maiden and the Lion' to 'The Tamed Lion', and 'The Fool' to 'The Crocodile'. She follows C.C. Zain in her attribution of Hebrew letters to the Arcana, explaining the symbolism of the letters in chapters V-VIII, and the Arcana in chapters XI-XIV. Chapter XV correlates the Tarot with the sayings of Christ, while five subsequent chapters coordinate the letters and the Arcana with the verses of Psalm 119. Corinne Helene went on to write other books that sought to integrate the Bible with ancient mythology, with astrology and with numerology. She died in 1975. Her last published comments on the Tarot are haphazard and brief asides in her *Sacred Science of Numbers* (Los Angeles, 1977).

The Arcana in Latin America

The esoteric Tarot spread among Latin Americans only after the Second World War. Some time in the 1960s, the Mexican firm of Franco Mora Ruiz published a 'Baraja egipcia', yet another Tarot pack with trump designs descending from those of Wegener, but in colour and with some divergences in the redrawing.²² Each trump card has a lower panel with an Arabic numeral on the right and a Hebrew letter on the left; in the body of each card is the corresponding letter or letters of the Roman alphabet (see plate 5c). The coloured artwork is surrounded by a white margin. This contains, on the left, a title or interpretation, with the name of a planet or zodiacal sign; for instance, 2 has 'CIENCIA VIRGO', 13 has 'TRANSFORMACION MUERTE ARIES' and 14 'REGENERACION TEMPLANZA TAURO', 18 has 'DECEPCION AMIGOS FALSOS CANCER'. The astrological correspondences are from C.C. Zain. The suit-signs of Cups, Coins, Batons and Swords appear as such on the Aces; but on other numeral cards, the Batons become shepherds' crooks, and the Swords become chess pawns. Compatible with the latter are court cards showing chess pieces – king, queen, bishop and knight – for the ranks of K (King), Q (Queen), J (Jack) and H (Horseman). These letter-indices apparently show the further influence of Zain's Tarot. The other court cards, with the same English-language indices, depict various portrait heads from Egyptian art. Each suit card bears small representations of corresponding cards of both

the double-headed Anglo-American pack and the single-ended Spanish regular pack, the latter according to the Catalan pattern.²³ The suit cards have divinatory meanings inscribed along the margins. Each court card, save for the Horsemen, bears the glyph of a zodiacal sign and its name in Spanish.

In the 1970s the 'Baraja egipcia' was copied in an anonymous version. This variation omits the white margins and their inscriptions. The zodiacal signs, as named on the courts (K, Q and J), are still given in Spanish.²⁴

A more influential trend was begun by J. Iglesias Janiero. His ample book, *La Cabala de predicción* (*The Cabala of Prediction*), was published by Editorial Kier in Buenos Aires.²⁵ Although the Tarot is only one of the book's divinatory subjects, Tarot cards appear as illustrations throughout. Some of these are small and indistinct, and not all 78 cards are represented. This suggests that the publisher made casual use of a Tarot that already existed independently as an actual pack. The first 22 cards are based on the Falconnier/Wegener designs, which have been varied, slightly in most cases, substantially in a few. Thus card 13 is named 'La Inmortalidad', and the reaper is no longer a skeleton and reaps grain, not people; on 16, named 'La Fragilidad', lightning strikes an obelisk rather than a pyramid. The central panel on each card again has its four corners rounded, as in an Egyptian cartouche. The upper zone includes a Hebrew letter with two other glyphs, Egyptian and/or magical. The cartouche rests on a plinth: at its centre is the card's name in Spanish; to the left are a sequential number and an astrological symbol; to the right are a Roman letter (part of an alphabetic order) and a numerological value (derived from the sequential number). The attribution of Hebrew letters follows Papus, but with a modification: the World, called 'La Transmutación', is lettered *Shin* and numbered 21, followed by the Fool, called 'el Regreso', as *Tau* and 22. Papus would not have recognised the astrological correspondences.²⁶ Iglesias makes no use of suit-signs; the cards from 23 to 78 form a series of fifty-six further named symbolic subjects of the same general kind as the twenty-two trumps. For instance, card 37 is here named 'Arte y Ciencia' and depicts a scribe; and card 60 is here named 'Evolución' and depicts a man confronting a mummy. The book illustrations are drawn in black line. The pack in circulation today, issued by Kier in 1971, is brightly coloured with metallic inks.²⁷ This pack includes the same names and general subjects as in Iglesias' book; however, the two sets of cards differ in

notational markings, graphic compositions, style of drawing and the occasional detail.

In 1969 Rodolfo Benavides published *El Tarot profetico y la gran piramide* (*The Prophetic Tarot and the Great Pyramid*, Mexico). He links each trump with passages from the 22 chapters of the Apocalypse but relies on Iglesias in allocating Hebrew letters and astrological powers.²⁸ *El Tarot profetico* has appeared in more than two dozen editions, variously revised and expanded. Another book by Benavides, *Tarot, o baraja egipcia* (*Tarot, or Egyptian Pack*, Mexico, 1982), includes, on its last pages, a Tarot that he designed. They are of heavy paper and can be cut apart to make a pack.²⁹ The designs lie within a central panel, rectangular with corners slightly rounded. Lower panels give the names decreed by Iglesias for all 78 cards. Apart from the sequential numerals, no special notations appear.

Two other Mexican Tarots, directly reliant on Iglesias's work, were anonymously published in the 1980s.³⁰ The names, glyphs and artwork are comparable. However, these two Mexican packs have marginal inscriptions giving divinatory, astrological and Cabalistic meanings, the latter involving the *sephiroth* and the Hebrew letters. For these marginal inscriptions, one pack uses Roman typeface, the other Gothic. In coloration, both Mexican packs differ from the Kier Tarot of 1971.

In 1984 the Union Temple at Berkeley, California, produced a limited edition of a 'Gnostic' Tarot.³¹ It is based securely on the Kier Tarot. But now, the foolish character – the man ignoring the crocodile – has been given the number 21, without changing the twenty-first inscription: he thus usurps that of Iglesias' World ('La Transmutación', linked with the letter *Shin* and with Neptune in Aquarius). An explanatory flyer says that the anonymous narrator, while travelling in Central America in 1980, acquired the model for the new cards. Its printing was poor, and photocopies of it needed to be emended by hand. The improved drawings, in black linework, are otherwise uncoloured.

In the 1990s cardmakers Naipes Comas (Barcelona) and Heraclio Fournier (Vitoria) have given the Kier Tarot still more descendants, which are marketed in Spain and the Americas.

The Arcana in Canada

The romance by Édouard Schuré (see [Chapter 13](#) – note 9) influenced a real Tarot: in 1979, Viviane Desmet published a Tarot in conjunction with Jean-

Louis Victor's book, *Tarot des grands initiés d'Egypte* (*Tarot of the Great Initiates of Egypt*, Boucherville, Quebec).^{[32](#)} The pack consists of the Major Arcana only. Their names, at the bottoms of the cards, descend mostly from Paul Christian. However, Arcanum IV is 'LE PHARAON'; XIII is unnamed; and XVII, XVIII and XIX are respectively 'L'ÉTOILE', 'LA LUNE' and 'LE SOLEIL', recalling C.C. Zain's use of the same in English. Along the tops of these cards are written letters and numbers, generally obedient to Paul Christian. However the notation 'Ts', which he attached to Arcanum XVIII, is here promoted to the highest ('LA COURONNE DES MAGES', labelled 'TS – TAU – XXII'). The Roman letters for the intervening cards are therefore thrown out of phase. The penultimate Arcanum is 'LE CROCODILE', labelled 'T – SHIN – XXI'. Astrological notations throughout conform exactly to Falconnier's. All the imagery is newly drawn, always observing the Egyptian style and Egyptian artefacts, and usually in the tradition dating back to Wegener and Falconnier.^{[33](#)}

CHAPTER 15

Knapp, Hall and their Tarot

J. Augustus Knapp

J. Augustus ('Gus') Knapp, born in Ohio in 1853, was the only son of John Knapp and Margaret Wentz Knapp. Augustus had a half-sister, Louisa, and a sister, Annie.¹ As a young man he developed his artistic talent at Cincinnati's McMicken School of Design. The annual Cincinnati Industrial Exposition, which exhibited both technology and art, accepted paintings by Knapp at least as early as 1874. Soon thereafter, he married Emily Ada Spring. She was the daughter of a Cincinnati supplier of domestic furnishings for riverboats that plied the Ohio. (The river flowed directly past the Springs' house on Front Street). Emily bore their only child, Ethel Camilla, in 1880. In 1882 the Knapps contracted to build their own home, a three-storey house on Oak Street in Norwood, a community north of Cincinnati. Augustus was evidently confident of his prospects as a freelance artist.

Knapp had already designed playing cards and advertising for United States Printing (later named the United States Playing Card Company). In 1883 Stowbridge Lithograph, a company noted for its refined printing of calendars, posters and playbills,² engaged his talents at \$45 per week. He worked for *McGuffey's Reader*, a standard textbook in American schools at the time. His peers were Thomas Moran, Henry Farney and Howard Pyle, all commercial artists who gained fame. Knapp was also hired by Standard Publishing, a company which occasionally needed lively pictures for a boys' magazine. Knapp became friends with a company manager, Curtis Gates Lloyd (1859-1926).

In 1884 the Knapps acquired especially friendly neighbours in Norwood. A new house was being built by C.G. Lloyd's brother, John Uri Lloyd (1849-1936) – his wife Emma was expecting their first child. John was a teacher at the Eclectic Medical Institute, which specialised in 'alternative' medicine. John and Curtis had founded a pharmacy together. Their

knowledge of plant extracts provided the medicines, while another Lloyd brother, Nelson Ashley (1851-1925), kept the company's records. Ashley and his wife lived near John and Emma. The Lloyd brothers, enthusiastic gatherers of wild herbs and mushrooms, sometimes conveyed the harvest to the Knapps' kitchen. Augustus and Emily Knapp also shared the Lloyds' taste for spiritual phenomena: they experimented with mediumistic séances, and all belonged to the Theosophical Society.³

A mutual friend of the Lloyds and the Knapps was Dr Jirah Dewey Buck (1838-1916). He wrote extensively on religion, metaphysics and health⁴ and practised 'eclectic' medicine. From his downtown office, he could consult both the Lloyd Pharmacy and the Lloyd Library: the brothers were steadily amassing a notable collection of plant specimens and books on organic pharmaceuticals.⁵ Buck was a Theosophist; he was also a member of the H.B. of L. The dual membership was not unusual: Thomas More Johnson, Papus and W.A. Ayton all held a dual membership. Indeed, it was Ayton who instructed Buck by post, beginning in November 1885. Buck independently corresponded with Peter Davidson. But at the very time that Dr Buck was promoting the Brotherhood in the US it was about to disintegrate in its dramatic crisis in the UK.

Buck was aware that the founders of the H.B. of L. had begun by slighting Mme Blavatsky's mahatmas. In January 1886 he wrote cautiously to Mme Blavatsky, a good friend of his, requesting general information about the H.B. of L., as though he were unaffiliated with it. Mme Blavatsky was privately alarmed by the rise in popularity of this group, which she regarded as a rival and a defamer of the Theosophical Society. In the spring, she learned from Ayton that he had exposed a founder of the H.B. of L., Thomas Burgoyne, as a convicted felon (see [Chapter 3](#)). Unaware of Buck's ties with Ayton, Mme Blavatsky recommended that the doctor make innocent inquiries of the clergyman. She wanted Buck to be informed directly by Ayton so that he could warn fellow Theosophists of the imminent arrival of Burgoyne and Davidson in America. She feared that the pair would tempt her disciples with shares in a colony for magicians, and that if a great many Theosophists were to embrace Burgoyne's movement, his bad reputation could besmirch the Theosophical movement, which had already received bad publicity. Dr Buck gave his allegiance to Mme Blavatsky and kept her apprised until the H.B. of L. was '*badly busted*'.⁶ It is worth noting Dr Buck's belief that the

unseen force behind Burgoyne and Davidson was Mme Blavatsky's arch-enemy, Chintamon (see [Chapter 3](#)). Buck even worried that Chintamon might leave India for the US to help Davidson and Burgoyne. There is no indication that the Indian really resumed his alliance with the Scotsmen.

With the collapse of the H.B. of L., and with Mme Blavatsky already having forsaken both spiritualism and Hermetism, Knapp seems no longer to have participated in séances or magical societies. He settled into an active but conventional life. An 1890 watercolour depicts the railway station from which the artist commuted to his work in Cincinnati.⁷ Holidays were sometimes spent on the Eastern seaboard, principally at Virginia Beach. Knapp was an enthusiastic photographer, and developed his plates and prints in his own home. He frequently selected neighbourhood children as his subjects, studying their expressions and gestures for use in his paintings. In 1893 the Knapps attended the Colombian Exposition in Chicago. Augustus would have been interested in its art and technology alike.

John Uri Lloyd began writing a mystical novel, *Etidorhpa* (Aphrodite spelled backwards). He asked Augustus to undertake the graphics, which amounted to more than 40 illustrations. The story's hero is guided by an eyeless mutant, which has the moist grey skin of an amphibian. More guidance is offered by a telepathic sage, old but youthful in appearance, and by a guardian of the 'Inner Circle' at the Earth's centre. These guides would seem to represent spiritualism's supernatural types – the elemental, the departed soul and the planetary spirit. They aid the hero in meeting Etidorhpa, goddess of love and unity. The story was well reviewed, and was translated into several European languages. In occultist circles, the sequence of encounters in *Etidorhpa* was thought to disguise the stages of a mystical initiation. Years later, as we shall see, Knapp would symbolise such an initiation in a Tarot of his own design.

A Cincinnati publisher marketed the illustrations of *Etidorhpa* (Cincinnati, 1896) as a set of stereopticon views.⁸ Because of his knowledge of cameras and of commercial printing, Knapp was able to supervise the project. He continued to illustrate books for Lloyd and others, including Laura G. Collins (1826-1912), for whom he produced pictures and calligraphy in a poem called *Egypt* (Cincinnati, 1899).

In 1901 the Knapps' daughter married William Behrman, who was then a bookseller's assistant. The young couple were welcomed into the Knapp

home. Their three children – Donald, Emily and Marjorie – were all born before 1910. In that year, Grandmother Emily Knapp died of a stroke. Her body was cremated; both she and Augustus were members of the Cremation Society of Cincinnati. The custom was still unusual among Americans, but was typical among Theosophists. Solicitous of his surviving family, Augustus anticipated the growth of the youngsters and expanded the house on Oak Street. He made oil portraits of his grandchildren, who profited from his liberal knowledge and talent. His work on Stowbridge's posters sometimes entitled him to tickets for the advertised performances: Don accompanied his grandfather to the Wild West Show of Buffalo Bill Cody, and never forgot being introduced to the famous marksman. When Don wanted to build and decorate a playhouse, he and his grandfather consulted the Egyptian Book of the Dead. They copied figures, life size, on to the walls of the little house. Don invited friends to enter as members of the 'Order of the Egyptian Gizinkus [sic]'. Over the door was a warning: 'Procul o, procul este, profani' ('Far hence remain, O Ye Profane').⁹ In more demanding work, extending from 1910 to 1920, Knapp painted 42 studies of fungi, rendered as watercolours. They were commissioned by Curtis Lloyd, who had become a noted mycologist.

In the same scientific circle, Knapp met and befriended a doctor named Laura Brickly. She was unconventional in her medical practice and in her personal style, adopting masculine attire. Laura and Augustus married and moved to a nearby community, Pleasant Ridge, but soon departed for California. In 1923 in Culver City, Augustus found work designing posters for Thomas H. Ince (1882-1924), a pioneer in the film industry. At the invitation of Manly P. Hall, Dr Laura Knapp gave a public lecture on 'occult anatomy' at the Trinity Auditorium in Los Angeles. On this occasion, Augustus Knapp met Manly Hall, who admired the artwork in *Etidorhpa*.

Augustus Knapp and Manly Hall now began the collaboration that produced many pictures for books by Hall. As reported in Hall's periodical, *The All Seeing Eye*, Knapp exhibited paintings and discussed them at a reception at the Ebell Club in Los Angeles. He probably designed the stylised scarab on the cover for Hall's *The Lost Keys of Masonry* (Los Angeles, 1923; retitled *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry* in 1931). He certainly illustrated later editions of the text. According to the

title page, he attained 32° in Freemasonry. At the age of 76, he designed the Revised New Art Tarot, discussed below.

Knapp had kept in contact with his friends and family in Norwood, Ohio.^{[10](#)} In 1930, he illustrated another book by John Uri Lloyd.^{[11](#)} In 1936 Lloyd suffered a fall and went to recuperate at the home of one of his children in Van Nuys, California. This was the last opportunity for Knapp to visit his old friend; Lloyd contracted pneumonia and died soon after. His body was cremated and the ashes interred beside his wife's grave in Kentucky.^{[12](#)} Knapp died in 1938; his widow scattered his cremated remains in the Pacific Ocean.

Manly P. Hall

Manly Palmer Hall was born on 18 March 1901 in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. His parents, William S. Hall and Louise Palmer Hall, were physicians. He was entrusted to his maternal grandmother, Florence Palmer,^{[13](#)} who lived in the US, where she raised him. She was a compulsive traveller, however, and Manly's education depended on their itinerary. In Sioux Falls, he patronised the 'Wild West Shows', and befriended an elderly 'redman'. In Chicago, Manly and his grandmother lived in an elegant hotel, called Palmer House, owned by relatives. He learned etiquette under the watchful eye of the Hindu *maître d'hôtel*, who always dressed as a maharaja. Manly enjoyed Atlantic City's newfangled cinemas, as well as Florence Palmer's traditional tea parties. He was introduced to astronomy by the director of the Mt Lowe Observatory, and encountered geology first hand on the coast of Southern California. In Washington, DC, the wanderers lived in a boarding house, and saved their money to buy concert tickets. New York offered famous museums – which Florence declared inadequate by European standards. When she decided that Manly needed strict discipline, she enrolled him in a military academy, but she soon craved new surroundings, and took him on more travels.

Although Florence did not require Manly to attend school, she did ensure that they regularly attended church. She was inclined towards the theology of her Presbyterian ancestors, but never subscribed completely to any church's doctrine. According to her personal belief, God was a benevolent Creator who expected each soul to develop its native abilities

and dedicate them to the good. She accepted individuals according to their merits, regardless of ethnicity, nationality and social class. These values clearly influenced Manly Hall.

Hall's grandmother died when he was sixteen years old; he stayed briefly at the Rosicrucian community that Max Heindel had established at Oceanside, California. Hall grew to doubt the antiquity of the heritage claimed by American Rosicrucians, but he was greatly attracted to their primary ideal, the spiritual reformation of society. He was a gifted speaker and a natural scholar, and in the autumn of 1920 he was invited to address a small audience in Santa Monica, California. The topic he chose was a defence of reincarnation. In the following year he began a lecture course in Los Angeles on the symbolism of mystery religions throughout history. He published two booklets, *The Breastplate of the High Priest*, referring to the 'ephod' of the Old Testament, and *Wands and Serpents*, treating its subjects as magical symbols. Hall conceived of writing an encyclopaedia that would encompass the Western tradition of occult philosophy. As he compiled material for this project, he issued *The Lost Keys of Masonry* (issued as *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry* after 1931). When he was 22, he became an ordained minister in the Church of the People in California. In 1923 and 1924 he travelled in Europe, Egypt, India, China, Korea and Japan. In each locale he studied the prevailing religions, and became convinced that the human mind is constantly searching to discover its own divinity. The quest is expressed universally in traditional myths and symbols and in personal visions and intuitions. In California, he published *The All Seeing Eye*, a journal on esoterica.

In order to fund his projected encyclopaedia, Hall enrolled subscribers. By 1926 he knew that he would be able to raise sufficient backing, and began to work devotedly on his text. The book appeared as *The Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy* (San Francisco, 1928). It was later entitled *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*.

Hall gives succinct summaries of the old French theories about the Tarot's origin, and he remarks that they are diverse and incompatible. He gives no personal opinion about the symbolism, except to cast doubt on the published attributions of the Hebrew alphabet to the 22 trumps. He carefully describes two Tarots, the Tarot de Marseille, as adapted by Wirth, and a pseudo-Egyptian Tarot, evidently in the tradition of Maurice-

Otto Wegener's Tarot for R. Falconnier's *Les XXI lames hermétiques du Tarot divinatoire* (Paris, 1896).¹⁴

Also introduced are little-known observations from William Wigston's *The Columbus of Literature* (Chicago, 1892). Wigston tries to demonstrate two theses: firstly that the plays attributed to William Shakespeare (1564-1616) were actually written by Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626); and secondly that Bacon's utopian ideals reveal his participation in the Rosicrucian movement, perhaps even as its founder.¹⁵ Wigston believed that the writings of Bacon and 'Shakespeare' contained encoded allusions to the Tarot, consisting of surreptitious uses of numbers significant in the Tarot: 56 (the number of suit cards) and 21 (the quantity of trumps). For example, in Shakespeare's First Folio (1623) on page 56, the name Francis occurs 21 times.¹⁶ Wigston decided that the Tarot may have been the fabled book of wisdom possessed by the Rosicrucians. Hall broadly accepted the implications in Wigston's opinions. In one respect, Hall went further and identifies Bacon with Johann Valentin Andreae, author of the *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*, which Hall took to be a promotion of Rosicrucianism rather than a satire on it. In *The Secret Teaching of All Ages*, Hall uses a simple 'Baconian cipher' whereby the letters of the English alphabet, according to their ordinal positions, correspond to numbers (J and I are regarded as one letter, corresponding to 9). He computes the numerological value of an inscription appearing on an engraved portrait of Andreae: the letters 'O MDC' are presumably a date (October 1600), but Hall reduces them to the number 33. This is also the numerological value of 'Bacon' (2+1+3+14+13). Hall concludes that the printmaker was hinting at his subject's real name.¹⁷ The number 33 is also the highest degree in Freemasonry. Hall believed that the Masons were authentic heirs of Rosicrucianism. If we combine the speculations of Hall and Wigston, we must conclude that an esoteric Tarot was adopted or adapted by no less a figure than Shakespeare-Bacon-Andreae.

The abundant illustrations in *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* include 46 colour plates, all watercolours by J. Augustus Knapp. One plate features his handmade copy of the Tarot by Oswald Wirth, whose drawings had appeared in Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. Knapp and Hall cooperated to produce an esoteric Tarot, the Revised New Art Tarot.

During the Great Depression, Hall lectured widely on esoteric doctrines. He promoted his books, but they did not make enough money to support

him financially. He was more of a missionary than a businessman, and he sold his books for whatever his public cared to pay. He did briefly work on the New York Stock Exchange, where some of his relatives had made their careers, but his experiences convinced him of the vanity of material possessions: he witnessed the suicide of a New York stockbroker who could not cope with his financial losses. Hall felt that Western civilisation urgently needed to renew its spiritual ideals. He resolved to collect relevant artefacts – books, manuscripts and works of art – and to house them in a centre where they would be accessible to all who wished to see them. He publicised his goal during his lecture tours across the country. In 1934 he supervised an architectural design and began the construction of the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles. A library provided the nucleus, to which a reading room and a print shop were added. Hall personally worked at the press, setting type and printing some of his own publications. Also in the 1930s, Hall became a writer for Hollywood films. One of his stories, ‘When Were You Born?’, was rendered as a screenplay by Anthony Coldeway (1887-1963) and purchased by Warner Brothers Studios in 1938. Hall's involvement in cinema led to friendships with prominent actors, including Bela Lugosi, whose portrayal of Dracula established the popular image of the aristocratic vampire.

In 1941 Hall began issuing *The PRS Journal*. In his many writings, he often borrowed from the myths, rites and symbols of Freemasonry. Although he had actually instructed the Masons in their heritage, he did not apply to join them until 1954. In November of that year he was ‘raised’ in Jewel Lodge No. 374 in San Francisco. In 1955 he took the Scottish Rite Degree with membership in the San Francisco Consistory. In 1961 he was elected Knight Commander of the Court of Honor. He later attained the highest Masonic degree, 33°. By then he was also delivering weekly discourses in the lecture hall that the PRS had built in 1959.

In the 1950s Hall recognised the creativity of the beatniks; but in the 1960s and 1970s, the behaviour of the hippies repelled him; he saw it as rebellious and hedonistic. Even their pursuit of occultism worried him because of its emphasis on ritual magic. He regretted the renewed attention to Aleister Crowley, who had been, in his opinion, merely an exhibitionist and a drug addict. Mme Blavatsky, on the other hand, was an esoterist whom Hall consistently praised; on behalf of the PRS he collected her writings, some of them drafted in her own hand; he modelled

her portrait, and had it cast in bronze. He considered her to be the most recent of the initiated adepts who have promulgated the mystery tradition.^{[18](#)}

Hall also wrote *The Tarot: an Essay* (Los Angeles, 1978). It was published with the reissue of the Revised New Art Tarot, renamed the Knapp/Hall Tarot. Hall's essay is attractive for its openness and fairness. He reviews familiar opinions about the pack: its genesis in mystery religions or in secret societies, its migrations with Crusaders or with Gypsies, its symbolism akin to the hieroglyphical 'Table of Isis' or to the allegorical 'Table of Cebes'.^{[19](#)} He does not promote any one theory, but does seem to favour a Rosicrucian connection. Inasmuch as Christian Rosencreutz was supposed to have studied in the Middle East and North Africa, Hall suggests that the origins of the Tarot should be sought in Arab culture. He recognises that the trump cards bear Christian symbols rather than Muslim ones, but supposes that European cardmakers altered the original designs. He mentions Death and Fortune as personifications occurring in many contexts apart from the Tarot. He again notes W.F.C. Wigston's convictions, but does not dwell on them. The Tarot's alleged Jewish Cabalism receives only passing notice. He concludes by observing that theorists usually find in the Tarot exactly what they are predisposed to find. The last twenty pages of the book display all of Knapp's cards, reduced in size and printed in black and white. The pack is advertised for sale by the PRS.^{[20](#)}

Hall edited PRS publications and delivered public lectures for the rest of his life. The Masons at Los Angeles honoured him with the Grand Cross, their highest distinction. He died on 29 August 1990, survived by his wife, Marie Bauer Hall.^{[21](#)}

The Revised New Art Tarot (Knapp/Hall Tarot)

Knapp's trumps combine those by Wirth and by Wegener. The new trumps use Wirth's names for them.^{[22](#)} The numbering remains the same: *La Justice* is trump 8; *La Force* is 11. The trumps bear Arabic numerals. (Knapp gives '0' to the Fool, which Wirth left unnumbered. Knapp's World trump is numbered '21/22'.) Wegener's influence on Knapp is not obvious, for the American artist has preferred his own atmospheric Romanticism over the rigid linework of Wegener's pseudo-Egyptian style. *Le Fou* is

blindfolded. *La Papesse* is veiled. A solar aura surrounds *L'Impératrice* as she holds a vulture, rather than a simple heraldic bird on a shield; hieroglyphic eyes stare out from her throne. The throne of *La Justice* incorporates a lion and a sphinx. The Revised New Art Tarot follows Papus and Wirth in its use of the Hebrew alphabet, even in assigning the penultimate letter, *Shin*, to *Le Fou* (the Fool). Lévi's sphinxes appear in *Le Chariot* and *La Roue de Fortune*. His inference of an infinity sign is clearly preserved in the hat brims that Knapp depicts in trumps 1 and 11. Paul Christian's imagery, with Wirth and Wegener as intermediaries, survives in *Le Fou*: Knapp's Fool seems oblivious to the pursuing dog and the advancing crocodile.

Knapp has added a few details to the European prototypes: *Le Bateleur* continues gesturing both downward and upward, but his wand has become a caduceus; *La Papesse* again holds a book and keys, but she has acquired two owls, which perch on her throne; *L'Impératrice* remains as the celestial woman of the Apocalypse, and Knapp gives her a sun disc as a pendant; *L'Empereur* still sits on his cubic throne holding a sceptre, although the latter is unique in having a sun face for a finial (see plate 6).

Knapp's original details are enough to reveal that he and Hall are using yet another system for coordinating the Tarot trumps with attributes that the *Sepher Yetzirah* cites for the Hebrew letters. We have observed a variety of systems whereby the 'doubles' are attached to the classical planets. Besides these, the *Sepher Yetzirah* associates the letters with various abstract qualities. Knapp has represented some of them pictorially in his cards. In the following table, bold italic typeface is meant to relate a feature in Knapp's cards to the assigned planet or quality.

Trump	Details by Knapp	Letter	Planet	Quality
2	<i>owls</i> (wisdom)	<i>Beth</i>	moon	<i>Wisdom</i>
3	<i>Red</i> costume	<i>Gimel</i>	<i>Mars</i> (red planet)	Health
4	<i>gold</i> costume	<i>Daleth</i>	sun	Fertility
11	<i>infinity</i> sign in hat	<i>Kaph</i>	Venus	<i>Life</i>
17	<i>butterfly</i> (soul)	<i>Pe</i>	Mercury (soul guide)	Power
20	heraldic <i>skull</i>	<i>Resh</i>	Saturn (rules bones)	Peace
21/22	<i>beautiful</i> woman	<i>Tau</i>	Jupiter	<i>Beauty</i>

Of course, Knapp did not invent all of the above details. Those in trumps 3, 11, 17 and 21/22 he borrowed from old Tarots; he merely recognised their new potential. The correspondences of 'double letters' to planets (and also of 'simples' to zodiacal signs) agree with those given by

William Wynn Westcott in his *Tabula Bembina* (Bath, 1887) (see [Chapter 2](#)). They appear again in his translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah* (London, 1887; revised 1893; reprinted 1911), but the Qualities have changed slightly, to yield the list in the above chart.²³ Westcott mentions his *Tabula* in notes to his *Yetzirah*, but makes no emendations. He then says that the true attributions have never been printed. He also observes that the planets and letters appear together in modern copies of the *Sepher Yetzirah*, not in ancient ones. This should give those Tarotists pause who, believing the Tarot to originate among Jewish mystics of remote antiquity, wish to track down the ‘authentic’ correspondences for the trumps.

According to Barlet, Knapp's fellow Theosophist in France, the trump sequence charts the spirit's journey, descending into matter, but finally transcending it (see [Chapter 1](#)). Barlet notes three transitional trumps – 11, 12, 13 – which, he claims, recapitulate the material obstacles to the spiritual ascent. Thus the eleventh trump deserves to look as foreboding as the Hanged Man (12) and Death (13). Knapp accomplishes this by showing Fortitude's lion as clawing the earth where bones are scattered. Knapp wrote a booklet to accompany his cards. It reveals the trumps as symbolising ‘the Progress of the Soul through Matter’.

- 1 Divinity in man, a beginning
- 2 creative power
- 3 desire, restlessness
- 4 power to control
- 5 highest intellect
- 6 love
- 7 freedom through knowledge
- 8 cycle of judgement
- 9 conquest of emotions
- 10 destiny turning
- 11 will power
- 12 a probationary cycle
- 13 passage to rebirth
- 14 ability to harmonise
- 15 evil conditions
- 16 unexpected happenings
- 17 gifts of the spirit [hope]
- 19 bringing into form
- 19 expanded consciousness

- 20 higher consciousness
- 21 Cosmic Consciousness
- 0 foolishness

The 'probationary cycle' discovered in trump 12 can be traced back to the H.B. of L.'s dependence on B.P. Randolph and thence to the French Mesmerists Dupotet and Cahagnet. None of these men discussed the Tarot, but they regarded the soul's earthly sojourn as a 'probation', leading to a higher cycle in the spirit world.^{[24](#)}

Knapp called the suit-signs Cups, Swords, Scepters and Pentacles. Hall's preferred terms were Cups, Swords, Batons (or Rods) and Coins. Two trumps include depictions of the four suit-signs: they occupy the table of *Le Bateleur*, and they frame the wreath of *Le Monde*. In the latter, the four suit-signs are applied to the Biblical 'living creatures', here taken as zodiacal signs and thereby linked to the four elements. The Sword is superimposed on the bull (Taurus, an earth sign), the Pentacle on the Lion (Leo, a fire sign), the Cup on the eagle (accepted as a substitute for Scorpio, a water sign), the Scepter on the human type (Aquarius, an air sign). In these quaternities, Knapp has forsaken his French authorities.^{[25](#)} This is even more clear when making a study of his elaborate Aces. He says that the elements impose tests on the four-fold body: the physical body (Swords), the etheric (Scepters), the mental (Pentacles), the astral (Cups). These 'bodies', as we suppose, are subtly implied in Knapp's four Aces: that of Swords includes a moon (said to influence the physique); Scepters have a blazing sun (rising on a new plane of existence); Pentacles have a holy crown (associated with the head and the mind); Cups have a rose-cross emblazoned on a heart (emitting 'astral light'). These correspondences, between suit-signs and 'bodies', Knapp credits to DeLou Vell, someone recommended to him by 'one of our most skilled cartomancists'.^{[26](#)} Her symbolism would have been understandable to the Theosophists, especially in their early days when Mme Blavatsky thought of herself as a 'Rosicrucian'. Hall also recognises four bodies, which he calls 'physical, vital, emotional and mental'.

The suit-signs are grouped to represent triangles, squares and stars; and some of these shapes are present as background diagrams. This geometry owes much to Comte C. de Saint-Germain's Tarot (see [Chapter 14](#)). Knapp relied on Papus for divinatory meanings in the numeral cards. Papus was

fond of symmetrical systems, and he suggested a welter of them for Tarot cards. Knapp chose an arrangement based on a triad: ‘commencement, opposition and equilibrium’, with each subdivided by the same formula. The Aces thereby become ‘commencement of the commencement’; the 2s are ‘opposition to the commencement’, the 3s ‘equilibrium of the commencement’. The process is finally resolved in the 9s as ‘equilibrium of equilibrium’ (indicated as E/E in the following chart). The 10s are left over and relegated to ‘ambiguity’. The suits’ four themes derive ultimately from the meanings that French cartomancers first gave to Clubs, Spades, Hearts and Diamonds. We have simplified slightly to conserve space.

stage	Scepters	Swords	Cups	Pentacles
1 C/C	new project	new conflict	new love	new fortune
2 O/C	sudden block	waning enmity	doubts	swift reverses
3 E/C	sure progress	antagonism	mutuality	small gains
4 C/O	effort needed	enemy subdued	intrusion	monetary loss
5 O/O	consolidation	enemy enhanced	rewards	balance
6 E/O	failure	victory	love lost	ruin
7 C/E	sure success	utter defeat	assurance	great fortune
8 O/E	some success	partial defeat	less love	unforeseen loss
9 E/E	prosperity	lasting enmity	maternity	secure fortune
10	Ambiguity ...in work	in one's enemy	in love	in gain or loss

Key: C = Commencement; O = Opposition; E = Equilibrium

These triple triads have nothing to do with the Cabalism that Papus pretended to promote. They have been extracted from the dialectical system of ‘thesis, antithesis, synthesis’, propounded by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831).

The court cards have meanings that can be traced to traditional French cartomancy.

	Scepters	Swords	Cups	Pentacles
roles:	friends	enemies	loved ones	indifferent ones
colouring:	dark	dark	fair	fair

These courts follow Paul Christian's terminology: King, Queen, Warrior and Slave (or Servant). They are respectively indexed as K, g, W, S. In Knapp's booklet, we are told that ‘g’ is an archaic form of ‘q’, but some occult intention seems more likely.²⁷

On the backs of Knapp's cards, he arranges the word TARO and some permutations (‘TARO / AROT / ROTA / OTAR’). Mme Blavatsky, in her

Isis Unveiled, had referred to the same broad formula, but made no reference to Tarot cards.²⁸ Knapp's panel of anagrams stands between two Egyptian figures. Their models can be found on the *Mensa Isiaca* (Table of Isis), discussed not only by Westcott, but by Lévi,²⁹ Hall³⁰ and others.³¹ The two figures are of Hapi, god of the Nile waters, and Geb, god of the earth's surface.

Hall's contribution to Knapp's Tarot

According to Hall, the Tarot suits symbolise the four Cabalistic worlds. He apparently regarded the usual suit-signs as inadequate, for he persuaded Knapp to add special indices: the radiant triangle, the ankh (the Egyptian hieroglyph for 'life'), the *vesica piscis* (a fish bladder, rendered as a mandorla), the cube.

	Scepters	Swords	Cups	Pentacles
index:	triangle	ankh	mandorla	cube
realm:	<i>Atziluth</i>	<i>Briah</i>	<i>Yetzirah</i>	<i>Assiah</i>
	Emanation	Creation	Formation	Manifestation

The realms form a continuous hierarchy, which Knapp acknowledges in his designs for the court cards. The figures wear costumes that create a spectrum of colours: brown and green (Scepters), blue and indigo (Swords), purple and red (Cups), orange and yellow (Pentacles).

The Revised New Art Tarot has a peculiar feature: each card bears a small shield bearing an occult sign, a 'meditation symbol', for which Knapp and Hall offer little explanation. Paul Foster Case, in *The Oracle of Tarot* (1933), comes close to a consistent theory when he explains that Hall viewed the ten numeral cards as symbolic of the ten *sephiroth*. A more complete interpretation can be derived from Hall's own discussion of the ten *sephiroth* in the four Cabalistic realms.³² He provides few clues to his own preferences in Tarot symbolism, but his clear presentation of the Cabala allows us to interpret many of the 'meditation symbols' in his Tarot. In the following lists, the capitalised words are our descriptive terms for his symbols; their meanings, as derived from his encyclopedia, are given in italics. The Pentacles here recall Etteilla's Tarot: his Coins symbolise the cosmic spheres, but with different correspondences. For Hall, the spheres belonged to *Assiah*, the realm of manifestation. In the

following list, the spheres are named in English and in Hebrew, as Hall gives them.

Rank	Scepters	Swords	Cups	Pentacles
Ace	ENCIRCLED DOT <i>Crown</i>	WINGS <i>Metatron</i>	CROWN <i>Holy Ones</i>	LEMNISCATE <i>Infinity</i>
2	COILED SNAKE <i>Wisdom</i>	TRUMPET <i>Herald</i>	EYE of RA <i>Revolving Ones</i>	ZODIAC <i>Masloth</i>
3	LAMP <i>Understanding</i>	RADIANT EYE <i>Contemplation</i>	CABALISTIC H <i>Mighty Ones</i>	SATURN <i>Shabbathai</i>
4	CROSS <i>Mercy</i>	SCALES <i>Justice</i>	CUT DIAMOND <i>Brilliant Ones</i>	JUPITER <i>Tzedeg</i>
5	LAW TABLETS <i>Justice</i>	SCOURGE <i>Severity</i>	FIRE/SNAKE <i>Fiery Ones</i>	MARS <i>Madim</i>
6	SUN DISC <i>Grace</i>	TWIN ANKHS <i>Likeness</i>	MONARCH <i>Kings</i>	SUN <i>Shemesh</i>
7	PALM FROND <i>Victory</i>	ROSE <i>Grace</i>	BATTLE AXE <i>The Gods</i>	VENUS <i>Nogah</i>
8	PEACOCK PLUME <i>Glory</i>	CADUCEUS <i>Healing</i>	DISC/4 WINGS <i>Sons of God</i>	MERCURY <i>Kokab</i>
9	COLUMN <i>Foundation</i>	CRESCENT <i>Man-God</i>	DISC/2 WINGS <i>Seat of the Sons</i>	MOON <i>Levanah</i>
10	KEY <i>Kingdom</i>	BRAZEN SERPENT <i>Messiah</i>	SOUL GLYPH <i>Souls of the Just</i>	GLYPH FOR 4 ELEMENTS <i>Cholom Yosodoth</i>

In the Revised New Art Tarot, each of the trump cards also bears meditation symbols. Hall never published any discussion of them. However, he surely relied on two Tarot books, *The Key to the Universe* (San Francisco, Philadelphia & London, 1915) and *The Key of Destiny* (New York & Washington, DC, 1919), by the American mystics F. Homer Curtiss and his wife Harriette. *The Key to the Universe* covers trumps 1 to 10, as part of the symbolism of the attendant numbers and of the

equivalent letters in Hebrew. *The Key of Destiny*, which has the same general format, includes the remaining trumps and the Fool.

When Hall relies on *The Key to the Universe*, he sometimes turns to the discussions of numbers, not of the trumps themselves. His inspiration occasionally lies further afield, but always in the proper context. This is true of the first trump, where Hall's source is in a Cabalistic passage: the number 1 is called 'Crown'.³³ Hall uses the crown as a device on the first trump. The number 2 is associated with Duality. The meditation symbol for the second trump consists of a superior crown with an inferior one, darker and inverted. Some of the lower trumps follow the Curtisses in showing geometric shapes: (trump 3) triangle, (5) pentagonal star, (6) hexagonal star.³⁴ The seven Pleiades become a ring of stars on the seventh trump. The Curtisses view 8 as underlying certain time-cycles, so its symbol can be an hourglass, which Hall accordingly adds to the eighth trump. The ninth trump displays nine vertices (a pentagonal star within a square). Trump 10 exhibits the tetractys (a pyramid of ten dots in successive rows of one, two, three and four). The tetractys, the Curtisses observe, was revered by the Pythagoreans.

In the higher trumps, which allegorise the 'evolution' of the soul, Hall's meditation symbols become ever more obscure. The Curtisses still provide complete clarification. *The Key of Destiny* begins with a treatment of the number 11 and the eleventh trump. That card, in the Knapp/Hall version, has a stylised swan as a meditation symbol. In *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Hall mentions that the swan is a symbol of initiation.³⁵ This agrees with the Curtisses, who refer to the number 11 as 'the initiate'. Hall, in his study of esoteric Tarots, would have seen the recurrence of certain ideas and would have been alert to them in the Curtisses' book: for instance, Éliphas Lévi had described the posture of the Hanged Man as an inverted triangle (formed by the head and elbows) surmounted by a cross (formed by the crossed legs). Lévi saw this glyph as symbolising 'the Great Work', an alchemical term taken as a metaphor for personal transformation. In advising Knapp, Hall needed to represent ideas in graphic form. In this process, Hall may have chosen subjects that the Curtisses themselves would have regarded as incidental: from their discussion of the number 20, Hall seized upon a casual allusion to 'flower or fruit' to decorate 'The Judgment'.

CURTISSSES' TEXT		KNAPP/HALL TAROT
trump	meaning	meditation symbol
11 Strength	initiate	swan
12 Hanged Man	personality, the Great Work	cross surmounting triangle
13 Death	Trinity producing elements	triangle & square conjoined
14 Temperance	'as above, so below'	yin-yang disc (earth/heaven)
15 The Devil	<i>Satanus est Deus Inversus</i>	'YHWH' inverted
16 The Tower	Divine Light	fist holding lightning
17 The Star	Foundation of Excellence	craftman's square
18 The Moon	light (reflected within)	flame in chalice
19 The Sun	life-force	variant of ankh (life)
20 The Judgment	flower (of perfection)	flower growing from skull
21 The World	circle of perfection and <i>Tau</i> -cross of spiritual power	cross within circle

Harriette and F. Homer Curtiss

The Curtisses' Tarot books supplied more than Hall's meditation symbols. Both books depict each trump in a plate with four variations: the Waite/Smith version, Wegener's design as copied for the book by 'Saint-Germain', and the paired illustrations in *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (Wirth's trump and that of the Tarot de Marseille). These plates were probably Knapp's models when he combined the drawings of Wirth with those of Wegener. When Knapp devised features to connect seven trumps to the seven 'double letters', using Westcott's correspondences, the artist again probably consulted the Curtiss books: they mention Westcott's translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah*, and quote it as they discuss each trump.

F. Homer Curtiss (1875-1946) was born in Jackson, Michigan, and was the son of Judge Homer A. Curtiss and his wife Sarah (née Doyle). The young Homer studied at the Connecticut Literary Institute, then earned degrees at Purdue University (1898-1900) and at the University of Pennsylvania (1905-09). In 1907, he married Harriette Augusta Brown (c. 1856-1932), a native of Philadelphia and the daughter of John Horace and Emma (Brightly) Brown. Homer Curtiss became a physician with a special interest in sports medicine. Harriette Curtiss was an author specialising in fantasy novels. His memberships included The Bacon Society; hers, the Huguenot Society.

The Curtisses considered themselves disciples of Mme Blavatsky, and sought to enrich Christian mysticism with that of other traditions. In 1908, in Philadelphia, the couple founded the esoteric 'Order of 15', with members joining and advancing by means of correspondence with the Curtisses. The '15' did not represent the total of the Order's members, but

had a numerological significance.³⁶ They found that the Order's name was not understood, and so changed it to The Order of Christian Mystics.

In 1909 the Curtisses founded a publishing house to promote their esoteric Christianity. An early title was *Letters from the Teacher of the Order of 15* (Denver, 1909). Their subsequent books came mostly from cities in California. Other publishers as far away as London carried other Curtiss books. In about 1923, the Curtiss Philosophic Book Company shifted from San Francisco to Washington, DC. By 1928 the Order of Christian Mystics had begun to decline, and the Curtisses then created The Universal Religious Foundation. Harriette Curtiss, who was about twenty years older than her husband, died in 1932. Homer Curtiss carried on publishing books on health and athletic performance until his death in 1946.

The Knapp/Hall Tarot indeed expresses the preferences of an esoteric 'school'. However, it was not Hall's Philosophical Research Society, but the Order of Christian Mystics. The Knapp/Hall Tarot accordingly combines Theosophical 'involution and evolution' with the number symbolism of the Curtisses and with the Cabalism that they borrowed from W.W. Westcott.

CHAPTER 16

Case and the Builders of the Adytum

Paul Foster Case founded the Builders of the Adytum, an esoteric school that still flourishes and offers his lessons on the Tarot as an exposition of the Cabala and as a tool for meditation and divination. BOTA today is reticent about Case's biography.

His successor, Dr. Ann Davies, gave instructions that it was the teachings that were important, not the channel through which they came. Therefore, we make it a practice never to release whatever material we may have of the nature of a personal history ...¹

Although biographical data on Case were once compiled by one of BOTA's librarians, who presumably intended to publish the work, no book has appeared.² The present authors are greatly indebted to Robert Word, archivist for The August Order of the Mystic Rose, and to Susan Roberts, historian for the town of Perinton, New York.

Case's origins

Case's parents traced their ancestry to New England. His father, Charles D. Case, was born on Long Island in 1845. Although he descended from seafaring men, he settled inland at Fairport, a small town near Rochester, New York.³ He worked sporadically as a telegrapher, then as a bookkeeper. In about 1880 he married a second wife, Ella Foster (b. 1857). Although she came from Wisconsin, she boasted of an exotic ancestry, 'half gypsy' but also claimed to be descended from Myles Standish, a passenger on the *Mayflower* and leader of the first white settlers at Plymouth Colony. Ella joined her husband's church, the Congregationalists, and within the year became a founder of its 'home missionary society'. Her first child was Paul Foster Case, born on 3 October 1884. His sister, Emma Constance, lived for only two years (1886-8).⁴

One of BOTA's newsletters mentions Case's childhood.

His mother was a teacher and his father was the head librarian of the town library, in which Paul Case was literally born. He could not remember when he learned to read, for by the age of four he was surreptitiously curled up with forbidden books in the attic of the library building, absorbing the knowledge of the ages with the same fervent eagerness a mystic experiences in reaching for God.⁵

The account requires slight adjustments for accuracy. Fairport's first library belonged to a philanthropic family, the Dickinsons. In 1874 they opened the Dickinson Subscription Library in their residence, a local landmark because of its age and because it had been moved, intact, from nearby Fullamtown.⁶ The book collection was available to all who paid a small fee. About ten or twelve years later, the owner, Julia Dickinson, began to suffer ill health and doubtless wished to ensure her peace and privacy; she moved the collection to a house around the corner.⁷ The second location accommodated more shelves for the collection, which was continuously augmented. The library occupied the ground floor, while the upper rooms provided dwelling space. This was the residence of the Cases and the probable birthplace of Paul Case. His parents were not custodians, but surely had the library at their disposal. They were close friends of Julia Dickinson.

The Dickinsons kept a winter home at Nassau in the Bahamas. Julia Dickinson paid for the Cases' passage to the Caribbean, and entertained them for weeks at a time. In January 1892 the Dickinsons were in mourning for the death of Julia's mother, but they had decided to make their annual trip for the sake of Julia's health. Bad weather developed during the voyage, and the ship tossed violently. The passengers were badly battered, and Julia struggled to survive. The Cases, still in New York, hastened urgently to Nassau, but by the time they arrived, Julia Dickinson had died. No longer did the Cases winter in the Caribbean. Another son, Warren Foster, was born in that year. At about this time the Cases moved into Julia Dickinson's home, and Charles Case became the librarian of the nearby collection.

One Fairport resident recalled that the community exhibited 'indifference and veiled hostility' towards the library – or at least towards the librarians. In 1895 the books were removed from general circulation. 'When you realize that for twenty years the Dickinsons had furnished practically a free library (always designated as public) without receiving even a "Thank you", you can not be surprised at this removal.'⁸ Occultists

will be quick to suppose that the Cases were ostracised because of their attention to 'forbidden books' in the collection. But it is doubtful that little Paul really read such books, and the library certainly did not have proscribed literature. It would be hard to conjure anything mysterious from *The Life of Lord Lawrence* or *Cousin Lucy at Play*. We have seen that the Cases were orthodox Protestants, as were the Dickinsons. Fairport's municipal library opened in the following year (1896), and Charles Case became secretary of the board of trustees.

Paul Case must have been obliged to mature quickly under the pressure of rapid changes. In May 1898 his mother developed a debilitating fever, probably typhoid. She suffered until her death in August. Her eulogy was delivered at the Congregational Church; Charles Case was by now a church deacon, and he soon became superintendent of the Sunday school. Paul was formally received into the church on 2 April 1899.⁹ He reputedly began to perform as the church organist when only nine years old. As hard evidence for this precocity, however, we have only the church records saying that there was once a pencilled inscription on the ceiling above the organ: 'Paul Case was an organ pump boy 1889': i.e. he manned the bellows at the age of fifteen.¹⁰

Case's successors at BOTA tend to present him as more precocious and mysterious than the evidence warrants. They assert that he underwent a mystical experience in his first decade. They say that, in his ninth year, he read *Kim* and admired Kipling – he reportedly wrote the author a letter asking him to validate transcendentalism. Kipling is supposed to have responded encouragingly. Of course this exchange is unlikely to have occurred so early in Case's life. When *Kim* was published, Case was fourteen; and Kipling's overtly magical fables came even later. However, there is no doubting Case's literacy or his musical abilities. His education doubtless came from his association with his elders, namely his parents and the Dickinsons – he did not graduate from high school. As Paul celebrated his sixteenth birthday, Charles Case was already arranging for the family's dispersal. He was engaged to marry for the third time, and planned to move away with his new wife.¹¹ Paul Case went to live in Rochester to support himself as a musician. He signed up with a booking agency that contracted for him to play piano and organ in vaudeville, a form of music-hall entertainment. Case performed in theatres and on showboats.

Case's career in occultism

In 1900 or 1901 Paul Case volunteered to perform at a charity benefit in Rochester. His contribution might have been musical, but it was more probably the performance of card tricks, for he was attracted to stage magic. At the performance he met Claude Bragdon, an architect in his thirties. He later became a scenographer, graphic designer, publisher and author (see p. 206). Bragdon asked the teenager, 'Case, where do you suppose playing cards came from?' That question was the catalyst that began Case's life-long inquiry into the Tarot.

In 1900 Claude Bragdon (1866-1946) knew very little of the Tarot, but within a few years he was familiar with it. His father was a Theosophist and he was married to a spiritualist medium. He was also friends with Nancy Fullwood (born Anna Mebane in 1870),¹² an author of Tarot books, allegedly the results of communication with spirits. Bragdon wrote the introduction to Nancy Fullwood's *The Song of Sano Tarot* (Binghamton, New York, 1929). His autobiography has a long section entitled 'My Occult Life',¹³ but he nowhere mentions Case.

The adolescent Case hurried to the library, where he discovered the prevailing myth that the first cards were Tarots. He was enthusiastic about their possible esoterism, and began collecting relevant books, presumably including English translations of Lévi and Papus. However, he found the old theories to be inconsistent and incomplete and decided to form his own opinions from meditation and intuition. He began to hear 'a Voice', a tutelary spirit who gave very explicit advice, for instance: 'If you will get the book on the top shelf, third from the left and open it up to page 101, you will find the reference you seek'.¹⁴ The implication is that such advice proved accurate. We do not know in which libraries Case was working.

Case is said to have had an encounter of legendary proportions while in his early twenties.¹⁵ He was hailed by an unfamiliar man in the streets of Chicago who was able to divine Case's most private thoughts and actions. The stranger declared himself an emissary from the 'Masters of Wisdom', a term then current among Theosophists. He offered Case a higher purpose than his anticipated career in music. Musical entertainment was destined to provide an adequate income, but not the fulfilling life that the Masters envisioned for Case, he said. If Case would accept the rigours of a spiritual quest, he would acquire the wisdom of the Masters.

Sceptical investigators may question the veracity of the two encounters that supposedly sparked Case's pursuit of esoterism, Claude Bragdon's question and the mysterious pedestrian in Chicago. The timing is suspect, for the ages at which it is alleged that they took place – sixteen and twenty-one – were also significant in the purported development of Frater C.R., the legendary founder of Rosicrucianism. There are ancient precedents for the Voice which served as Case's library consultant and for the choice relayed from the Masters of Wisdom. The Voice resembles the spirit that Socrates claimed to hear, while the choice of destiny resembles the selection offered the young Alexander of Macedon; he chose a short and adventurous life over a long and boring one. In the story about Case, his alleged choice is somewhat incongruous, for he actually continued to work as a professional musician. In addition to performing as a pianist and organist, he conducted vaudeville orchestras. But we are assured that this hectic schedule did not disrupt his study of the Tarot and the Cabala.

BOTA claims that 'Case discovered the true attributions of the Tarot and had them published before he was 21 years old', i.e. before October 1905.¹⁶ Case himself dated this publication to 1907, but neglected to cite the reference.¹⁷ His discovery, if made independently, would have been miraculous, for his system of 'attributions' closely coincides with that secretly taught in the Golden Dawn. One of Case's publishers cites his earliest writings as having appeared in *The Word*,¹⁸ a Theosophical magazine founded in 1904 by Harold Waldwin Percival (1868-1953) and edited by him. No issues dating from 1907 contain anything by Case. Only in 1916 did the magazine receive material by him; it did treat of the Tarot trumps and the Hebrew alphabet.¹⁹ The article, 'The Secret Doctrine of the Tarot', extended into 1917. It is possible that Case misremembered that date as 1907. He was quite disingenuous in claiming independent authority for his Tarot system: in his initial article, he cites Waite, Crowley, Mathers and the Golden Dawn. (Crowley had revealed the salient attributions in his *Liber 777* (1909) and *The Equinox* (1912)). Case illustrates the Cabalistic Tree of Life, drawn in his own hand and based on the Golden Dawn's scheme. For the Fool and the first four trumps, Case shows primitive line-cuts of the 'old Tarot', mostly modelled on the Tarot de Marseille, and contrasts them with refined engravings of counterparts in a 'new Tarot' of his own devising, relying on Oswald Wirth and Pamela Colman Smith. Case's vocabulary and interpretations have a distinctly Hindu slant,

undoubtedly adopted to appeal to readers of *The Word*. The question arises why Case chose to submit his thoughts to a Theosophical vehicle. He may have been responding to Percival's idea that the figures on the Tarot cards are 'in such geometrical proportion that they attract and hold elementals'.²⁰ Case would have moved quickly to provide the cards with a more positive content in Theosophy. In addition, *The Word* was then serialising 'The Ritual of High Magic', Major General Abner Doubleday's English translation of Éliphas Lévi's book. It has 22 chapters with allusions to the Tarot trumps. This alone would have attracted Case's attention and could have prompted his article. However, it was cut short with the chapter on the tenth trump, when Percival abruptly ceased publication, truncating several articles that promised 'to be continued'.

Michael James Whitty (1862-1920) was the author of a book on Theosophy and the editor of *Azoth*, a monthly journal on esoterism. He belonged to the American branch of the Golden Dawn, and was prominent in its Thoth Hermes Temple in New York. In 1918 Case began publishing a series of Tarot articles in *Azoth*. They detailed further correspondences for the Tarot trumps as revealed by Crowley and by 'V.N.' (probably Victor Neuburg). In 1918 or 1919, Whitty recommended Case for membership in the Thoth Hermes Temple.²¹ Case rose easily through the lower grades of the Order: he was initiated as Adeptus Minor on 16 May 1920, with the 'spiritual' name Frater Perseverantia, and only three weeks later, at the Corpus Christi ceremony, he became third Adept. Before the year was out, he was in charge of teaching about the Tarot within the Temple, giving popular lectures. At the same time, Case was saddened by the illness of Michael Whitty, whom he 'revered and loved above all other men'.²² Case helped as sub-editor of *Azoth* in 1920, although he was still employed in the vaudeville circuit. Whitty died on 27 December. Case left a musical production in the South and returned to New York, where he assumed the editorship of *Azoth*; but in June 1921 he left the magazine. It collapsed after two more issues.²³

Case had already compiled his Tarot articles from *Azoth* and was publishing them as a small book, *An Introduction to the Study of the Tarot* (New York, 1920). He again acknowledges his predecessors: Lévi, Papus, Mathers, Waite and Crowley. Case uses, but does not illustrate, the Waite/Smith Tarot. He maintains the Golden Dawn's numeration of Strength (8) and Justice (11). He gives a diagram of the Tree of Life as it

had become familiar in Christian cabalism. He borrows directly from Papus: every card is associated with a Hebrew letter from the Tetragrammaton. Case agrees with Papus regarding the association of letters with court cards and numerals, but not with the trumps. They differ because Papus begins his list with the Juggler, while Case, following the Golden Dawn, begins with the Fool. Case again follows the Golden Dawn in attributing all 22 Hebrew letters to the Fool and the trumps. For each of them, Case gives the meaning of the assigned letter and its correspondences in several realms: astrology (planets and signs), psychology (life and death, peace and strife, etc.), cosmology (in the Cabalistic ‘cube of space’), mystagogy (the 22 intelligences on the pathways connecting the *sephiroth* of the Tree of Life).

Case follows Lévi in aligning the first ten trumps with the *sephiroth*. Here too is Papus's idea of ‘reduction’. Any number greater than nine can be made commensurate with one of the first nine digits simply by adding the multiple digits (and repeating the process, if necessary) until a single digit results. By this means, the first three *sephiroth* receive great emphasis. Binah receives trumps 3, 12, 21; Chokmah trumps 2, 11, 20; Kether trumps 1, 10, 19. But 10 and 19 also fall to Malkuth, the lowest *sephira*. It seems unlikely that anyone would really have used 21 Tarot trumps to symbolise aspects of the ten *sephiroth*. Yet Case is undeterred by such considerations; he is enthused. He introduces the process of ‘extension’ (Papus’ ‘theosophical addition’), requiring the addition of a given number to all lesser integers. Case applies both his formulae to all trumps higher than the ten, and thus installs them in two places on the Tree: ‘First, reduce the number [of a trump] to an integer [and study the corresponding *sephira*]; second, find the extension of that number and reduce it also [to designate another relevant *sephira*]’.²⁴ The resulting web of myriad linkages would certainly be beyond the foresight of any card designer. Case also expects certain linkages among those *sephiroth* that are aligned in the same column, and again on the same level, and again within certain triads. No antique Tarot manages to illustrate this enormous range of relationships – cosmological, astrological, numerological and schematic (on the Cabalistic Tree).

Case does achieve an incidental goal: he ably elucidates the Waite/Smith Tarot, where Waite's own expositions are crucially hampered because of the oath of silence that he had sworn in the Golden Dawn. Case did swear

an equivalent oath, but he maintained that it did not bind him on matters of the Tarot because, by his account, he had discovered the ‘attributions’ on his own.

In 1921 Case received admonitory letters from Moina Mathers, presiding from her London Temple of Alpha and Omega. She complained not about Case's public teaching, but about his teaching within the Order. Her letters imply that he was advocating sex magic. This charge may, however, have been based on malicious gossip about Case's liaison with Lillian Geise, another member of the Thoth Hermes Temple. Case remained dedicated to the Order, but early in 1922 he resigned his prominent position. Moina Mathers was not satisfied. She had also heard that Case and his friends were questioning her own competence and that of her late husband. In fact she had not maintained the standards for induction, had not defined the responsibilities of officers, and had not provided them with required documents. She punished Case and Lillian Geise for this criticism by rescinding their memberships. This precluded their transfer to another Golden Dawn temple: they were completely expelled. Their departure occasioned dramatic defections, including that of Elma Dame, Imperatrix of the temple in Philadelphia, who wrote a letter of resignation that opined, ‘When you got rid of Mr. Case, you “killed the goose that laid the golden egg” ’.²⁵ Lillian Geise naturally concurred – but a new project was around the corner. ‘Apparent disappointments have turned out to be blessings in disguise and now our freedom from an old alliance is another step towards realizing what we now consider our life's work,’²⁶ she wrote. This work was the teaching of the esoteric traditions in an independent channel, open to the public.

At about this time, Case claimed to hear again that Voice which had assisted his youthful researches. Now, however, messages were conveyed via the mundane telephone. The Voice belonged to a certain ‘Master R’, who appeared in New York in order to instruct Case in the knowledge necessary to form a new school of ancient wisdom. ‘Master R’ is a name connected with ‘Prince Rokoczi’, one of the titles allegedly belonging to the legendary comte de Saint-Germain (see p. 170). He lived in the XVIII century, but claimed to have been born in antiquity and remained vigorous because he had discovered the alchemical ‘elixir of life’. Later occultists provided him with a fantastic career disguised as St Alban, Roger Bacon, Christian Rosencreutz, Francis Bacon and other notables.²⁷

Case did not participate in the conspicuous consumption and continuous parties associated with the 'Roaring Twenties'. He moved from his quarters at 15 Hamilton Place, in Manhattan's Upper East Side, and set up a study group in Boston. He presented himself as 'Dr Case', implying an academic degree. His purported status as 'Doctor of Sacred Theology' is doubtful. From an office at 367 Boylston Street, he disseminated his occultist lessons to subscribers, charging a modest fee which was never enough to make his extensive hours at the typewriter profitable. He had no press or duplicating machine, but only carbon copies. When they were depleted, he was obliged to type the lessons anew. He called his enterprise the 'School of Ageless Wisdom', and then the Builders of the Adytum. His teachings on the Tarot remained essentially those of the Golden Dawn. It is believed that he married Lillian Geise, but that she died shortly thereafter (on 9 May 1924, according to Case's later followers). He then married Asta Fleming, an actress of Norwegian birth. They may have met in Manhattan. Indeed, Asta may have been a member of the Golden Dawn.^{[28](#)} Case seems to have continued his wandering. It is not clear if he was still working in the vaudeville circuit, or if his travels now were devoted entirely to his school. Some of his early publications appeared in Boston, some in Buffalo.

Case settled with his new wife in Fairport. They lived at 158 North Main Street, a house that was slipping into dilapidation; they were so impoverished that Asta could afford only one presentable dress. When they were invited to public gatherings, she would borrow different cuffs and collars, which she would use to create the illusion of a more extensive wardrobe. She contributed to the Congregational Church by staging religious pageants in the sanctuary. In coaching them so that they would relax on stage, she induced the dignified ladies of the church to bend over and chant, 'I know my heart. I know my mind. I know that I stick out behind.' Of course the Cases' interests, whether theatrical or magical, need not have implied any disrespect for Congregationalism. Such eclecticism was feasible in their philosophy of Rosicrucianism – the founders were supposed to have been mystics and Cabalists, but Protestant Christians nonetheless.

Paul Case believed in the existence of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross as an authentic movement that preserved secret ancient traditions. He believed that legitimate Rosicrucians had written the famous manifestos in

XVII-century Germany. But Case held the manifestos themselves to be allegories, as he carefully explains in *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order* (Boston, 1927). The Rosicrucian *Fama* refers to a mysterious ‘Book T’. S.L. Mathers assumed that this artefact, otherwise unknown, must be the esoteric Tarot, a conclusion that Case rejects; but he does rediscover the Tarot where the *Fama* refers to an ambiguous *rota*. He regards the *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz* as a satire by Johann Valentin Andreae, who was opposing the Rosicrucian movement – rather than supporting it, as is frequently but erroneously believed. Case rejects the name Christian Rosencreutz as part of Andreae's imposture. Even the founder's supposed initials – C.R. and C.R.C. – Case explains as Cabalistic symbols for a mystical hero equivalent to Horus, Krishna, Christ and Hiram Abiff of Masonic lore. (Case had become a Freemason on 22 March 1926.) Case explains the fabled wanderings of C.R.C. as universal stages of spiritual growth: purification in Damascus, initiation in Damcar, occult experience in Egypt, enlightenment in Fez. This geography, for Case, symbolises the microcosm: the feet (the foundations) are presumably in the east, since the head (the intelligence) is in the west, namely in the university town of Fez in Morocco. Case's subsequent statement that the Tarot was invented by XII-century scholars while convening in Fez may be his own allegory, meaning that the cards are a product of a high intelligence but not necessarily of a historical convocation.

The Moroccan birthplace of the Tarot is again reported by Case in *A Brief Analysis of the Tarot* (Buffalo, 1927).²⁹ Case's doctrine and terminology still adhere to the Golden Dawn's, except for certain details, such as three new planetary correspondences (see chart, [Chapter 20](#)). He also attaches one or two musical notes to each trump in an elaboration of a Golden Dawn system. He has mercifully abandoned Papus' ‘reduction’ and ‘theosophical addition’, but presents a new formula. Case arranges the trumps as septenaries.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

He claims that the top line consists of powers, the second of agents and the third of effects. The columns denote seven specific sequences. The potency of 1 (the Magician) acts through the agency of Strength (8) to produce 15 (the Devil). We are left to discover for ourselves what

significance lies in this sequence and the six others. At the end of the book, Case gives divinatory meanings for all 78 Tarot cards. He surprisingly omits the Tree of Life from the book; the *sephiroth* receive only hints, and the 22 pathways are not discussed. *A Brief Analysis of the Tarot* contains no pictures of cards, but it explicitly relies on the Waite/Smith Tarot. Case's explanation of it is again superior to Waite's own attempt. In the following year, Case published *Two Courses in the Tarot*.

The 1930s were eventful for Case. He abandoned the Waite/Smith Tarot and conceived his own. For the drawings, he did not rely on his own skills as demonstrated in *The Word*, but on those of Jessie Burns Parke, an artist in Boston. Case issued their cards in 1931 (see below). Asta Case had by then joined her husband in Massachusetts, but they soon divorced. He moved to Southern California in 1933 and married his third wife, Dorothy Spring. He set up his Builders of the Adytum in Los Angeles. He taught medical treatments that used sound and colour. This probably stems from his attraction to the early Rosicrucians, reputed to be healers. BOTA eventually flourished through its correspondence courses. Case wrote the lessons, which emphasised his usual topics: Tarot, Cabala, Rosicrucianism, mystical alchemy and therapy. One of his first publications in California was *The Oracle of the Tarot: A Course on Tarot Divination* (East Pasadena, 1933). The trumps employ the Hebrew letters, but follow the attributions published by Papus and Wirth, rather than those published by Crowley and by Case himself. The book is also remarkable for promoting the Knapp/Hall Tarot. Case is known to have met J. Augustus Knapp in his old age.

Case met Ann Davies (née Epstein) in 1943. Her own account is recorded in a brochure that BOTA used to disseminate.

While this young woman and older man had not previously met in this life, there occurred what can only be termed an explosion of recognition between them. Immediately she knew that at last she had found her way home and what her life work was to be. With humble devotion she performed all the tasks, many laborious and menial, which his care and work required, while absorbing and digesting into her spiritual being the luminous and transcendent teachings which he revealed to her.^{[30](#)}

Ann admired Case because he was adept at 'high magic' – and stage magic. He had pursued the latter since childhood, and now belonged to the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Los Angeles Guild of

Prestidigitators (in which he served as secretary and as chaplain). He and his new disciple performed as illusionists, billed as 'Paul and Annie Girl'. They worked together as 'mind readers'. Case wandered among his audience and prevailed on members to surrender personal possessions. These he displayed to all except Annie Girl. Although blindfolded, she could name the proffered items, as though perceiving them telepathically. This routine was so convincing that it inspired rumours of truly paranormal powers possessed by the partners. In fact, mentalists are known to transmit their thoughts to each other not through extrasensory perception, but through a code disguised in their seemingly innocent patter.

In 1947 Case issued *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages* (Richmond, Virginia). It resembles his Tarot book of 1927, but forsakes the Waite/Smith Tarot. Case now refers to Jessie Burns Parke's trumps, which are shown in black and white. The scheme of three septenaries (or seven triads) appears again. Eleven is the mean number between 1 and 21, between 7 and 15, between 8 and 14, and the members of seven other pairs represented by the numbered trumps. Deep meanings are revealed in these pairings – or so we are told. The Tree of Life returns in this book, and the *sephiroth* are associated with the hierarchy of grades in the Golden Dawn. The 22 pathways receive the usual Hebrew letters. They have all the correspondences from the Golden Dawn teaching, slightly modified for BOTA. Here too are the same meanings and instructions for Tarot divination. *The Tarot* demonstrates Case's desire to bolster occultism with psychological theories. He may have been the first Tarotist to cite C.G. Jung's belief in the 'collective unconscious'.³¹ Case 'psychologises' certain trumps: the Magician represents 'self-consciousness', the High Priestess 'cosmic subconsciousness', the Empress 'the generatrix of mental images', and the Emperor 'inductive reasoning'.

Case revised other writings, such as *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order*. He did not work radical changes, but refined his vocabulary and examples. He was tireless in producing lessons and delivering lectures.

He married again, to yet another woman who supported his efforts to train students in esoterism. Harriet, the last of his wives, was a wealthy and cultured heiress from Los Angeles.³² She helped to fund his projects, despite disapproval from her family. In 1954, in need of rest and relaxation, the Cases travelled to Mexico City, where Case died on 2

March. Harriet Case interred his cremated remains at Forest Lawn, Los Angeles. Mourners included fellow Masons: Paul Case had joined local lodges (Hollenbeck No. 319 on 5 September 1944 and Eagle Rock No. 422 on 2 June 1953). His funeral ceremony was conducted in accord with the Liberal Catholic Church, in which he had been ordained.

Case had taught Jason C. Lotterhand, whose own lectures on the Tarot have been condensed as a book.³³ And Lotterhand, in turn, was known to Ruth Blighton, one of the founders of the Holy Order of MANS. Both Blighton and Lotterhand belonged to BOTA. Other authors, such as Eden Gray, have no affiliation with BOTA, but have high regard for Case's books. Muriel Bruce Hasbrouck knew Case personally, and extended his ideas in her own book (see [Chapter 20](#)). Like Case, she integrated ancient occultism with Jungian psychology.

The BOTA Tarot

As already related, Case commissioned Jessie Burns Parke to draw a Tarot for use by his students. In *The Tarot: A Key to the Wisdom of the Ages*, Case complains that Parke adopted a style too much like Pamela Colman Smith's. However, she returns to the tradition of the Tarot de Marseille in her drawings for Death (a skeleton reaping with a scythe) and the Sun (two children beneath a sunface). She is actually more faithful than is Pamela Colman Smith in using the Golden Dawn's instructions about trumps 13, 14 and 17. Death's scythe has a 'Tau cross' for a handle. The angel of Temperance stands between a lion and an eagle, both alchemical emblems. The Star card includes an ibis as the 'bird of Hermes'. Other trumps depend on Lévi and on Christian, especially via the Tarots of Oswald Wirth. The Tower has a characteristic detail: the walls have 22 courses of masonry. Parke emblazons each trump with its Hebrew letter. Here again are the attributions that the Golden Dawn vainly struggled to keep secret. She also contrives letters within the trump subjects: the Hermit's hood is shaped like the letter *Yod*; the Hanged Man is suspended from the letter *Tau*; the dancer in the World trump is draped in the letter *Kaph*. (Lévi and Waite, in their own ways, had already conceptualised trumps with camouflaged letters.)

In *The Tarot*, which is Case's *summa* on the trumps, he refers to the court cards and numerals only in discussing divination, saying that it requires a complete Tarot pack. He praises Knapp's Tarot and regrets its

unavailability (in 1947). Case cites his publisher, Macoy, as a source for the Waite/Smith Tarot. We could infer that Jessie Burns Parke had not yet added suit cards to her trumps. But courts and numerals now exist; they appear to be by her hand, whenever she executed them.

Her suit signs are congruent with the implements on the Magician's table. The Cups have delicate stems supporting bowls like lotus blossoms; the Pentacles bear the five-point star; the Swords have elaborate hilts; the Wands have prisms for finials. Case disdained Waite's precedent of putting the divinatory meanings of the numeral cards into picture form. The suit signs in the BOTA Tarot are disposed in geometric patterns reminiscent of the Saint-Germain Tarot. The court figures are not copied from Miss Smith's, but convey the same symbolism. Kings, Queens, Knights and Pages (all boys) are costumed clearly to embody the four elements as in the Waite/Smith Tarot and the Golden Dawn Tarots of more recent issue.

BOTA's Tarot has always been printed in black and white. K. Frank Jensen, one of today's leading authorities on the esoteric Tarot, says, 'The B.O.T.A. deck has been published ever since its appearance in the 1930s in a normal size edition (107x63 millimeters) and in a larger (175x105 mm) edition with 22 cards and colouring instructions included.'³⁴ Case's *The Highlights of the Tarot* still gives these instructions. Colouring is ostensibly a way for the owner to internalise and personalise the pack. The trumps illustrate Case's *The Tarot* and the current edition of *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order*. In the latter, he gives the grades of the Order of the Golden Dawn, presenting them as though they belonged to the original Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Each grade is associated with parts of the Cabalistic Tree of Life, which are named in Hebrew. The names are spelt out, then illustrated with the trumps that bear the appropriate Hebrew letters. The trumps also illustrate Case's meditative poetry in *The Book of Tokens* (Los Angeles, 1934). In its fourteenth edition (Los Angeles, 1989), the BOTA trumps were published in colour for the first time.

The BOTA Tarot influenced several others: that by David Sheridan, the Gareth Knight Tarot (executed by Sander Littel) and the 'Royal Fez Moroccan Tarot' (conceived by Roland Berrill and executed by Michael Hobdell). The reference to Fez of course reflects Case's apocryphal story about the origin of the cards. Perhaps the most ambitious variation on the BOTA Tarot is the set of trumps that evolved in the Holy Order of MANS

(see [Chapter 17](#)). In 1996, BOTA began publishing its Tarot in an alternative version: its captions are in Spanish.

Jessie Burns Parke

Harwood Burns Parke was the son of Edwin Perry Parke and his wife Anna (née Serven). Harwood Parke became a banker in Paterson, New Jersey and married Lavinia Blarcom. Their daughter Jessie was born in Paterson on 2 December 1889. As a schoolgirl she studied locally, in private schools and in lessons with an artist named Mary Morgan. She later enrolled in the New York School of Applied Design for Women, where she studied with independent artists Philip Hale, Frederick Boxley and William James. In 1920-21, she attended the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School and was awarded the Paige Travelling Fellowship, which permitted her to study in Paris. In 1924 after further European travels, she returned to Boston. She established a studio at 121 Newbury Street, although she lived in Arlington Heights. She worked frequently at the photographic portrait studio established in 1922 by Warren Kay Vantine (1892-1986). Her best works, mostly portraits and miniatures, are in oil paint. Her sitters included Roscoe Pound, Dean of the Harvard Law School; the Baroness de Bistram, of Paris; Jessie Allen Fowler, Vice-President of the American Institute of Phrenology; Edward C. Jeffrey, a botanist at Harvard University; and Richard Cardinal Cushing, of Boston. South Boston High School received a painting from Miss Parke. She belonged to professional clubs, including the Boston Art Club, the Association of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers (Washington, DC) and the Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters (Philadelphia), from which she received a medal in 1945. She was a Presbyterian and a Republican. She is not known to have been an occultist; for her, her Tarot would have been primarily a graphic arts project.

Her fifth trump, the Hierophant, is reportedly a portrait of Case. It indeed resembles him (see plate 8). The trumps were completed when Paul Foster Case was nearly 47 and Jessie Burns Parke was nearly 42.^{[35](#)} She maintained her studio for many years and died on 6 March 1964.

CHAPTER 17

The Blightons and the Holy Order of MANS

Earl Wilbur Blighton was born near Rochester, New York, on 18 April 1904. His parents divorced during his childhood, and he was brought up by his mother and maternal grandmother. When he was still very young he rejected their creed of Free Methodism and began to investigate Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. He later claimed to have had the guidance of a spirit named Ananias. Blighton received technical training from the Monroe Mechanics Institute of Rochester and from the US Navy School of Radio Telephony. His employment included drafting for the Rochester Telephone Company and engineering for Graflex and for Hawkeye, a subsidiary of Eastman Kodak, based in Rochester.

Blighton's interest in physics led to his invention of a 'ray machine', which projected a series of colours that he claimed could alleviate arthritis, palsy, sciatica and other physical ailments. In 1946 the American Medical Association decided that Blighton was practising unlicensed medicine. They reported his activities to the State of New York and he was tried and convicted, although he had adduced many testimonials supporting his therapy. He thereafter routinely condemned the AMA for its monopoly on the tools and techniques of healing.

Blighton is known to have been married and to have fathered three sons. His wife was a Roman Catholic. He took instruction in the catechism, but did not join the Catholic Church. He explored spiritualism and the Science of Mind, a movement based on the writings of Ernest Holmes (1887-1960). Blighton's marriage ended in divorce, and he was estranged from his sons, although one of them was later reconciled with his father and sympathised with his spiritual quest.

In the late 1940s Blighton moved to California, where he worked as an electrical engineer. He became known as a healer and teacher in the San Francisco Bay area. He gave classes at the San José headquarters of AMORC (Ancient Mystical Order of the Rose Cross). This group professed the usual Rosicrucian beliefs in Hermetism, alchemy and

Cabalism, but also incorporated yoga, Buddhism and Tantrism. Blighton respected this syncretism, but found AMORC to be neglectful of the Rosicrucian dedication to healing. He was the principal founder of the Science of Man Church in 1961. Reverend Blighton attracted a following, and invested in a meeting hall, where he conveyed to his disciples much of his esoteric learning, which included Christian charity and a reverence for Christ. Blighton's faith was shaken, however, in the summer of 1963, when his hall was destroyed by fire. His congregation drifted away, leaving him burdened by the Church's debts. For a few months, he found solace with the Christian Yoga Church, first at their sanctuary in San Francisco and then at their retreat at Virginia City, Nevada. He studied Eastern scriptures, and practised meditational and respiratory exercises. But public outreach was still lacking. He returned to San Francisco and a part-time job as an electrical engineer. His greater interests were in religion and charitable works.

In the spring of 1966 Blighton and his new wife, Ruth, revitalised the Science of Man Church. They set up a chapel at 1005 Market Street, San Francisco, but relocated a year later, on Duboce Avenue. They offered community aid and classes in religion. Blighton wrote *The Golden Force*, a treatise about the mystical teachings of 'the Master Jesus'. This term was borrowed from Mme Blavatsky, who regarded Christ as one of the Masters comprising the Great White Brotherhood. Theosophists believe that the Masters are pure spirits who sometimes incarnate to direct the spiritual evolution of humankind. In Blighton's view, Christ was a mystic whose teachings were suppressed by mainstream Christianity. In both public and private settings, Blighton purportedly became an entranced medium for Christ's continuing prophecies. Many of the channelled messages focused on a coming 'planetary illumination', the form in which Blighton expected the Second Coming to be fulfilled. In preparation for that golden age of the spirit, he resolved to restore primitive Christianity. This, he supposed, entailed the complete equality of men and women. He accordingly ordained Ruth Blighton as a priest in the Science of Man Church.

San Francisco in 1967 was the site of the famed 'summer of love'. Youthful adherents of the counter-culture arrived in their tens of thousands from across the country.¹ The news media projected scenes of carefree hippies in their enclave at Haight-Ashbury, as they tried to sell their

handicrafts – bangles, sandals, candles and sandalwood – to bewildered tourists. The idyllic tableaux portrayed by the press ignored problems of urban crowding, homelessness, vandalism, drug addiction and general conflict with ‘the Establishment’. Earl Blighton ministered to the youth of Haight-Ashbury and adjacent neighbourhoods, having, in the autumn of 1967, reorganised his small group into the ‘Order of Man’. Members of the Order donned conservative clothes with clerical collars. The ‘brothers and sisters’ patrolled the streets, not to proselytise, but to alleviate suffering. The Order lived communally at a ‘brotherhouse’, first at 39 Guerrero Street, then at 20 Steiner Street.

The Blightons codified the Order's by-laws and on 24 July 1968, filed them at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The organisation was now named ‘The Holy Order of MANS’. The neologism was said to be an acronym of four Greek words: *Mysterion* (religious mystery), *Agapé* (spiritual love), *Nous* (divine mind) and *Sophia* (Gnostic wisdom).² The Order's purpose was to preserve the ‘Christian Wisdom’ of antiquity and to proceed by means of revelation rather than dogma. The Order would establish brotherhouses, seminaries, missions, clinics and guidance centres for young adults. These steps obeyed the charge from the Great White Brotherhood. The Holy Order of MANS would ready souls to cope with the ‘higher vibration’ that would occur in the last days. Earl Blighton was of course familiar with electromagnetic vibrations. Theosophists and other esoterists also spoke of spiritual vibrations, and the hippies sensed good and bad ‘vibes’.

The theology of the Order was in the latest style, emphasising love, brotherhood, radical reform and ‘consciousness raising’. However, its traditional values stood against the counter-culture's casual sexuality, hallucinogens and rebellion. The Blightons drew on a venerable heritage, combining American utopianism, transcendentalism, Catholic monasticism, millennialism and Platonism. The Blightons did not specifically acknowledge these sources, but asserted participation in a universal faith. The *prisca theologia* had been revived in the Age of Aquarius.

Earl Blighton was well versed in esoteric symbolism. He may have read G.R.S. Mead's scholarly surveys, notably *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* (London, 1900) and *Thrice Greatest Hermes* (London, 1900), for the former had been reprinted in 1960 and was popular in the Bay Area.³

Hermetism, Gnosticism and mystical Platonism placed a high premium on the efficacy of sacred images. Plotinus, the first Neoplatonist, claimed that an enlightened artist could have access to the realm of pure Ideas and give them adequate expression. This opinion prevailed in the Holy Order of MANS. Sacred symbols could provide personal contact with the mind of God. Worship, prayer and meditation could be enhanced by a symbol as a focus.⁴ The preferred symbols were often associated with luminosity. The theory doubtless had a special attraction for Blighton, who believed in the therapeutic properties of light rays.⁵ Light can be inferred in many of the Tarot's symbols. The higher trumps, from the Tower to the World, can be pictured as a progress from Stygian darkness to eternal radiance.

The Tarot became part of the brotherhood's Student Training Program. This prescribed a weekly schedule of classes in four broad areas of study: the Bible, philosophy, practical ministry and literature.⁶ The prominent 'philosophy' was declared to be Hebrew. It depended mostly on the Tree of Life as it is known among Tarotists. Even before her marriage, Ruth Blighton had studied the entire course of BOTA's lessons, in which the Tree and the Tarot are prominent. Blighton asked her to teach their students in a weekly class on the Tarot. In need of visual aids for classroom use, she enlarged the Tarot trumps to poster size, relying on the cards that she knew from BOTA. She did not regard them as unassailable models, only as conveniently available ones. A sister in the Order made sketches from the posters, and a set of actual cards was soon produced in a limited edition, using only black line. Students coloured their copies with paints and pencils, as Case's students had done. Unlike Case, the Blightons disdained the divinatory use of the Tarot: it was to be purely instructional and devotional.

Ruth Blighton invented a few novelties for the Order's Tarot. The Fool's torso emits an elliptical aura. The pillars flanking the High Priestess support two basins, the one on her right containing 'passive' water, the other 'active' fire. The Empress still corresponds to Venus (her gown here embroidered with fish), but her shield bears an eagle rather than Venus's dove, which was Case's preference. The Emperor has no shield, but an eagle decorates the visible sides of the cubic throne. The Hierophant has exchanged his papal tiara for a turban. Severed heads at the feet of skeletal Death are now enclosed in transparent spheres, symbols of the *sephiroth* of Wisdom and Understanding. In the Star card, sigils on seven celestial

spheres identify them as planets, and the radiant star discharges a lightning bolt that narrowly misses the nude urn-bearer and plunges into the scintillating pond. Ruth Blighton has developed a few details from the Crowley/Harris Tarot: the Chariot includes the Holy Grail, here transported by a descending dove; the scales of Justice have hemispheric pans, together implying a complete globe symbolising perfection; on the pathway in the Moon card, an Egyptian beetle propels a solar disc, indicative of eternal rebirth. The twelfth trump has been renamed as 'Suspended Man', and the highest trump is called 'Cosmos'. The names appear in the lower borders of the cards, flanked by a Hebrew letter on the right, and its phonetic value in English on the left. The attributions follow Case's and the Golden Dawn's. She has cleverly invented a mnemonic feature: since each Hebrew letter is homonymous with a Hebrew word, she inserts a small drawing of the appropriate subject near the lower right-hand corner of the picture plane; in some cards, this corner curls illusionistically back on itself, thus revealing the mnemonic sign. In some editions, Arabic numerals are centred in the upper margins.

In 1971 the Order published a Tarot book of 108 pages, *Keystone of Tarot Symbols: an Outline of Tarot Symbology in a Nutshell, and Coloring Instructions for Twenty-two Keys of the Tarot*. The 'symbology' provides each card with its correspondences – numerological, astrological and Cabalistic – essentially following the teachings of Case. The frontispiece illustrates the Tree of Life: the familiar spheres, channels and Hebrew letters coalesce as an inverted tree, a motif made familiar by Robert Fludd's XVII-century book.⁷ *Keystone* illustrates each trump with a drawing, and briefly describes it. Frequent reference is made to ancient books, notably the Bible. The last illustration in *Keystone* shows all the trumps in a format of four sloping rows of five cards each. The Fool and Cosmos stand outside this configuration: they respectively symbolise spiritual potential and the ultimate goal (Cosmos as cosmic consciousness). The first row proceeds from right to left in a stepwise descent, while the second reverses and ascends; the same alternation applies to the next two rows. Trumps 1 to 5 represent the soul's entry into mundane affairs; but the Hierophant predicts a mystical liberation, depicted in the next five cards, on an ascending slope. The Wheel (trump 10) predicts a transition to spiritual states, seen in a quintet of tests, with the Devil at the depths. The five ultimate cards show the ascent through

increasing enlightenment. Further significance is found in vertical groupings. The first five trumps serve as headings for columns that respectively symbolise different aspects of Unity, Duality, Triplicity, Quaternity and Quintessence. These possibilities are indicated, but not elaborated.

For some in the Order, the Tarot 'keys' assumed the status of icons. In the early 1970s the Blightons began teaching special classes on the importance of the Virgin Mary. She was regarded not only as an exemplary woman, but also as an intermediary with Christ and a personification of the 'Divine Feminine'. This last role permitted her identification with the High Priestess in the Tarot. At least one missionary in the Order combined the trump with a tabletop shrine to Mary: a red votive candle glowed between two small columns representing those in the second 'key'.⁸ The Blightons' Mariology had its immediate source in *The Life and Mission of the Blessed Virgin* (La Canada, California, 1971), a book by Corinne Helene (see pp. 227-8).

In 1974 the Holy Order of MANS published *Jewels of the Wise*, another Tarot book, nearly twice as long as the first. The 'jewels' are the ten *sephiroth*, which are sometimes called 'sapphires'. The cards have been redrawn by 'a brother and a Sister whose fine and patient work is deserving of tribute'. The new pack is not a great departure, only a few details having been changed. The Fool's costume has simplified sleeves, no longer flame shaped (as in the brotherhood's first Tarot and those by Case and by Waite). Musical notes float around the High Priestess. The Empress holds a heptagonal shield that bears an alchemical eagle, now two-headed, as in Crowley's Tarot. A two-headed phoenix emblazons the Emperor's shield, conventionally shaped but oddly placed flat on the ground. On the gown of the Empress the motif is now a swarm of bees, symbolising creativity. On the throne of the Emperor, the motif is now a lamb, symbolising innocence. Crowley's Tarot was the proximate source for the bees and the lamb. Another illustration (page 198) shows the Tarot trumps placed on the 22 pathways of the Tree of Life. (The trumps here are actually the earlier versions in *Keystone*.) The inverted Tree from *Keystone* appears again on the last page of the 1974 book. Another diagram (page 15) is the Rose Cross, a stylised corolla at the centre of a Latin cross with triple lobes at the extremities. The rose petals, 22 in number, are marked with individual Hebrew letters (the three 'mothers'

clustered at the centre, encircled by the seven ‘doubles’, then the twelve ‘simples’). This Rose Cross was familiar to Crowley, Regardie, Case and all other members of the Golden Dawn. *Jewels of the Wise* has a fourth diagram, a rectangle formed of twenty cards, again in four rows and five columns, excluding the Cosmos and the Fool, as in the previous book. But here the rows, unlike those in *Keystone*, all proceed from right to left. The first five trumps again stand at the heads of columns of cards, but half of them have shifted position in the new geometry. The resulting columns have novel themes, as follows.

Trumps 1, 6, 11, 16 = ‘mentality ... and the Word’. Each image shows divine communication with earth. The eleventh trump is Justice, as in the Golden Dawn and in BOTA.

Trumps 2, 7, 12, 17 = ‘various functions of the alchemical water’. The robe of the High Priestess supposedly transforms into water. It flows into other cards – behind the charioteer and beneath the star. The Suspended Man is the very personification of water: this element is the correspondence for the assigned letter, *Mem*.

Trumps 3, 8, 13, 18 = ‘The eighth trump is Strength’, here a personification of vitality. She corresponds to Leo, the sign of summer, a season of growth.

Trumps 4, 9, 14, 19 = ‘different degrees of accomplishment’. The numbers, in this sequence, indicate attainments on successively higher levels of spirituality.

Trumps 5, 10, 15, 20 = ‘a series of triplicities’. In each image, two figures stand before their superior, whether hierophant, sphinx, devil or angel.

The text attempts neither to unify these four themes nor to trace their historical origins.

The Blightons steadily arranged for the entire administration of a complex community – both spiritual and material – which was nothing less than a church. It embraced congregations of worshippers, lay disciples, life members, religious orders and priests. Blighton had continued to ordain women, a total of 52. Their clothing was designed to indicate institutional status; a tailoring department was organised by members of the Order. Especially recognisable to the public were the Brown Brothers of Holy Light, whose robes resembled those of the Franciscans. The Holy Order of MANS extended to all major cities and

university towns in the USA. The Order owned considerable property, and operated brother-houses, missions, youth hostels and child care centres. Brothers and Sisters were community activists and volunteers in prisons, hospitals and clinics. The Order was flourishing. But Blighton may have had premonitions of his death or of the Order's demise. In the spring of 1974 he collected his writings in a 'time capsule', and directed his assistants to deposit it in the California desert. To a friend at the San Francisco Theosophical Society, Blighton presented a copy of his latest work, *The Book of Alchemy*, to be kept secure, should his Order ever disband.⁹ He died suddenly, of natural causes, on 11 April 1974.

Through the years, Ruth Blighton and interested members of the Order patiently refined their Tarot. Some half-dozen persons contributed to the project. In 1979 the Order, publishing as Epiphany Press, issued the last version of its Tarot 'keys'. The Empress wears a gown free of bees, but a lone bee descends to a rosebush. The heptagonal shield bears a winged heart. Death is 'Transition'. The Devil is 'The Adversary'. Accompanying the pack was a booklet with the colouring instructions from *Keystone*.

After the death of its founder, the brotherhood soon suffered a period of disruption, followed by one of strict control, then outright repression. The reformer was the General Director, Master Andrew (Vincent Rossi), who had been one of Blighton's initial followers. In the early 1980s Rossi secretly converted to the Eastern Orthodox Church. He began to purge the brotherhood of its 'heterodox' strata and to insinuate his new preferences in ritual and doctrine. Theosophy, Cabalism and Hermetism were no longer accepted. The Order's libraries of esoterism were discarded or burned. The existing stock of titles promoting mystical growth published by Epiphany Press was packed into warehouses in California. Ruth Blighton asked the director for a few copies of the books and Tarot cards the Press had published, but they were not forthcoming. She asked if she could buy the publication rights, but her request was refused. Then the literature was moved to the desert near Reno, Nevada. Some 33,000 pounds of printed matter were bulldozed beneath the ground.¹⁰

Several of Blighton's personal followers protested and broke away from the Order. Karen and Titus Hayden were a couple who had married in the Order and distinguished themselves by years of service, she as a therapist, he as a priest. They resigned and settled near Mt Hood, Oregon, as did two other dissentient priests, Mary and Mark Anderson. In March 1987 the

Andersons welcomed Ruth Blighton into their home. Later, she moved to quarters prepared for her in the Haydens' cottage. These dissenters resurrected Earl Blighton's previous organisation, the Science of Man Church. The Holy Order of MANS officially ended in 1988. About 750 of the brotherhood were baptised by Metropolitan Pangratios Vrionis of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Vasiloupolis (City of Queens, New York). The converts were allowed to form a new order, Christ the Savior Brotherhood (CSB). A few recalcitrants, mostly in California, still ordain priests and disseminate Blighton's lessons.

The Science of Man Tarot

The Science of Man Church still exists. In 1995 Ruth Blighton again improved the imagery of her Tarot. The Fool card incorporates a small monogram, 'SOM', in which the middle letter is a solar disc. The Magician's table is more classical in style. The High Priestess wears a gown embroidered not with the Greek cross, but with a cross formed of two slender ellipses. She sits in silence (no musical notes appearing). The Empress' shield frames the dove of the Holy Spirit. On the side of the Emperor's throne, the lamb has matured into a ram. Key 15 is 'The Deceiver'. No lightning bolt disturbs the Star. Numbers and letters are confined to the bottom zone in each card. The results are handsome and certainly bespeak great dedication and sincerity. Ruth Blighton hopes that her church will one day conceive an even more distinctive Tarot in the name of the Science of Man.

The Animation Tarot

In about 1975 a prominent novelist called Piers Anthony met a member of the Holy Order of MANS, and expressed interest in it. Anthony was welcomed as an observer and subsequently developed his fictional hero, a mystical monk named Brother Paul. This character appears in seven volumes by Anthony. The Tarot is basic to his trilogy: *God of Tarot* (New York, 1979), *Vision of Tarot* and *Faith of Tarot* (New York, 1980). The three titles were eventually combined as *Tarot* (New York, 1989). Anthony appears to have based his protagonist on those famous Tarotists who were actually called Paul. In *Tarot*, Brother Paul is initiated in an Egyptian rite that recalls the fable by Paul Christian. The fictional monk knows

prestidigitation by cards, a skill really pursued by Paul Case. And 'Father Paul' was an affectionate name for Earl Blighton: he referred to his faith as 'Paulean' Christianity, and some of his followers speculated that he was the reincarnation of the Apostle Paul. Anthony's monk belongs to the Holy Order of Vision, obviously inspired by the Holy Order of MANS. Brother Paul lives in a future where interplanetary travel is common. His Order sends him to investigate phenomena on the planet Tarot, where contemplation of the cards transmutes the imagery into a visionary panorama, rather like today's 'virtual reality', but populated with creatures with their own volition. This sounds like the astral projection practised by Crowley and other members of the Golden Dawn. Crowley indeed becomes a character in Anthony's trilogy: as Master Therion, Crowley is made to conduct Brother Paul into 'drug trips', time-travel, infernal descents and psychic transport. Brother Paul creates the 'Animation Tarot'. He increases the trumps to a total of 30; and the common suits are joined by another, bearing the lemniscate (the infinity sign), here used as an emblem for the human aura. The suits have new themes: nature, science, faith, trade and art, which are attached to Batons, Swords, Cups, Coins and Lemniscates, respectively.¹¹ Anthony's story distorts not only the structure of the pack, but the history of the Tarot. The members of the Holy Order of MANS were displeased and disappointed with Anthony's fictions.

CHAPTER 18

Lind and his Followers

The Insight Institute Tarot

Frank Lind was one of the leaders of the Insight Institute based in New Malden, Surrey.¹ In about 1950 he designed a distinctive Tarot. It is one of the first esoteric Tarots to show some deliberate respect for the pack's actual origin in the early Renaissance. Lind drew all 78 cards, which he claims to have taken from 'the earliest reliable sources; they are mainly based on an Italian Tarot, dating back to the 15th century, and now elsewhere quite unavailable'.²

Lind's models for the Major Arcana are not actually Italian: Arcana II, III, IV and XIX come from the Waite/Smith Tarot, while the remainder are from the French Tarot de Marseille. None of the cards has its name inscribed. At the tops of all 78 cards, the letter T appears, in order to help the cartomancer to see when the cards, especially the numerals, are inverted in a lay-out. The Major Arcana have Roman numerals beneath the 'T'. They follow the order of the Tarot de Marseille. Arcanum XVIII [the Moon] is peculiar. In some versions of the Tarot de Marseille, a central pathway is shown between the usual dogs, but Lind perceived it as a scroll, with the inscription 'MA'.³ This has no precedent in other Tarot packs.

Lind calls the suit-signs Cups, Swords, Wands and Pentacles. The last two terms are typically occultist, although the suit cards themselves show an acquaintance with non-occult models. The upper corners of Lind's court cards are decorated with rosettes, familiar in the Minchiate (Florentine Tarot). The Kings and Queens are enthroned, shown in frontal poses, as in the Minchiate. The Knights ride horses, always advancing to the right, unlike the Minchiate's counterparts, which are usually variations on centaurs and which face in different directions. Lind's Pages are all young men on foot. The Page of Swords and the Page of Wands both hold shields, as is common in the Minchiate. Figures of equivalent rank differ only slightly in their poses, depending on the gestures with which the suit-signs

are held. Among the numeral cards, the suit-signs are arranged congruently from suit to suit. Swords are straight. Swords and Wands are disposed separately, without intersecting.

Lind's writings

Lind's trumps illustrate his little book *How to Understand the Tarot* (London, 1952).⁴ He issued *My Occult Case Book* in 1953. He created *How to Read the Tarot*, a series of mimeographed lessons that could be obtained by correspondence, presumably through the Institute. By 1968, if not earlier, he had left the Insight Institute, and offered his usual Tarot lessons through the Society of Metaphysicians, in Hastings.⁵ His students were expected to purchase his Tarot or the Waite/Smith Tarot, which he calls the the 'Waite and Colman Pack' (also abbreviated as 'W & C' and 'C & W').

Lind's writings are largely free of occultist technicalities. He promotes no programmes for imbuing the Tarot with astrology, alchemy, Rosicrucianism or Cabalism,⁶ although he is clearly conversant with these subjects. He knows the contemporary literature on Tarotism, citing Grillot de Givry,⁷ Jean Chaboseau⁸ and Gérard Van Rijnberk.⁹ Lind espouses no theory about the origin of the Tarot, although he assumes that it came from outside Europe. Whatever the age of the actual Tarot cards, he says, their symbols are far older. He associates many of them with ancient myths and beliefs.

In *How to Read the Tarot*, Lind succinctly summarises his divinatory meanings for the suit cards. The Kings and Queens denote mature or elderly persons. Knights tend to be younger persons, but sometimes express various states of mind or concepts. Pages are usually youths.

Wands = business

Swords = disasters

Cups = affectionate relationships

Pentacles = money

Ace: News

Four: Gain

Seven: Change

Two: Work

Five: Good luck

Eight: Expenditure

Ten: Profitable result

Three: Partnership

Six: Benefit

Nine: Hopeful outlook

Lind gives both divinatory and esoteric meanings for his trumps. He finds the cards useful for prediction and for self awareness. 'Rightly used, they can perform the function of a psycho-therapeutic agent.'¹⁰ For Arcana XI

and XV, Lind uses the names published by C.C. Zain. 'The Angel of Time' recalls Ouspensky's term for Temperance.

- I** Juggler or Magician
- II** The High Priestess or Female Pope
- III** The Empress ('Queen of Life')
- IV** The Emperor
- V** The Pope or Hierophant
- VI** The Lovers
- VII** The Chariot
- VIII** Justice or The Balance
- IX** The Hermit
- X** The Wheel of Fortune
- XI** The Enchantress
- XII** The Hanged Man
- XIII** Death ('The Reaper')
- XIV** Temperance ('The Angel of Time')
- XV** The Black Magician
- XVI** The House of God or Lightning-Struck Tower
- XVII** The Star
- XVIII** The Moon
- XIX** The Sun
- XX** The Day of Judgement
- XXI** The World

Lind's Fool has no numeral. The figure is copied from the Tarot de Marseille; but Lind, when writing his Tarot book, seems to have had the Waite/Smith version in mind, for he imagines the foolish man 'walking toward a precipice'.^{[11](#)} This image, along with the names 'Enchantress', 'Reaper', 'Angel of Time' and 'Black Magician' are to be found among Lind's principal followers.

Rolla Nordic's Tarot

After extensive travels during which she collected Tarot packs and studied Tarotism, Rolla K. Nordic eventually settled in New York City. Lind's Tarot book ends with the sentence, 'The Tarot points the way': one of Rolla Nordic's books is *The Tarot Shows the Path* (London and Phoenix 1960; New York 1990). It is efficiently organised, with chapters treating of individual Arcana. Their numbers and names mostly accord with Lind's,

including the Priestess, Hierophant, Enchantress, Reaper, Angel of Time and Black Magician. Arcanum X is now 'The Wheel of Life'. The Fool becomes 'The Magus', but is still pictured as a jester about to step off a cliff. Nordic claims that the Magus is confident at every step, for he knows that the ground will rise up to support him. After naming each Arcanum, Nordic gives its divinatory meanings, deriving mostly from Lind's *How to Read the Tarot*. As she proceeds to more detailed commentaries, she echoes many of Lind's terms and ideas. She is fond of quoting Scripture, and frequently urges us to be optimistic and charitable. She fails to mention her debt to Lind and his schools.

The Tarot Shows the Path has, as its only illustrations, black-and-white cards, newly designed. They were drawn by Paul Mathison, and were issued as a pack when Nordic's book appeared.¹² Mathison uses a deliberately naïve style reminiscent of common playing cards with their flat forms and geometric patterning. His figures are doll-like and sweet. They can be coloured by hand, following personal taste or Nordic's exact prescriptions. The trumps bear Roman numerals. Nordic's designation for each trump is at its bottom edge, except for Arcanum XIII, which goes unnamed. Mathison borrows a few details from the Waite/Smith Tarot: the Empress holds a heart-shaped shield displaying the sigil of Venus; the Emperor has an Egyptian ankh for a sceptre and occupies a throne decorated with a ram's head on the armrest, as in Pamela Colman Smith's version, but here he sits in profile; her Sun card has been imitated by Mathison, showing the conventional face of Sol suspended above an infantile equestrian who holds a banner. The other trumps conform to the Tarot de Marseille. Now, however, the Marseille Fool is harmonised with the texts by Frank Lind and by Rolla Nordic: the Magus (still a jester) proceeds toward a precipice. The court cards (King, Queen, Horseman, Page) are inscribed with their ranks and their suits, the latter using Lind's names: Cups, Pentacles, Swords and Wands. The Swords are straight. Multiple suit-signs do not overlap or intersect. The numeral cards are unnumbered. The suit-signs obey Lind's correspondences to the four elements. Flowing water, flames and foliage distinguish three sets of court cards, but air seems to lack a consistent motif. For the Aces, the symbolism is clear: the Cup contains water; beneath the Pentacle, wind fills the sails of a ship; the Sword's blade is afire; the Wand sprouts leaves.

Sandor Konraad's numerology

Sandor Konraad earned a degree in the humanities at Cornell University. He continued with courses at New York University and at the New School for Social Research. In New York City he met Rolla Nordic and became her student in Tarotism. His special interest was numerology, which he sought to integrate with the cards. Number symbolism has always been a part of Tarotism, especially as some of the digits 1-10 seem to relate to certain trumps and to certain *sephiroth*. But Konraad wanted to use numerology as an essential part of Tarot divination. He began to keep a 'casebook', a journal of his readings for others, and evolved his own methods for spreading the cards.

Konraad found time amid his responsibilities as a high school teacher in New York City to publish his occult ideas in *Numerology and the Tarot* (West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1983). Most of the book represents the layouts and readings from his casebook. He also discusses the lives and personalities of figures from history and literature: their names reduce to numbers, in which Konraad finds significance. When using the Tarot he names the trumps exactly as does Rolla Nordic. (Although her 'Magus' is his 'Fool'.) His illustrations are not from her Tarot, but from the Waite/Smith Tarot. Its counterchange of trumps XI and VIII requires Konraad to change them back (he does so without altering their inscriptions in the illustrations). His numerological use of the cards is various: he sees the trumps' numbers as having inspired the allegorical images. Unfortunately this theory works easily only for the first nine or ten trumps; the higher numbers have no standard meanings in ancient traditions. (Konraad slightly extends the list: XI is 'Messenger of Light', and XXI is 'the Master Builder'.) The more elusive trumps, XII-XX, are addressed in a comprehensive scheme that makes the trump sequence into a quest, the journey of the Fool as he rises to Mastery (trump XXI). In this narrative, Konraad endows the trumps with the astrological correspondence from the Golden Dawn (Justice belongs to Libra, the Enchantress to Leo). Elsewhere, however, the trumps' numbers are associated with quite different planets and signs. In spreading the cards, Konraad uses conventional formats, and also invents others. For instance, since the Tarot reader knows the numerological values of all letters, a name can be spelled with each letter represented by a card from a shuffled pack: if a three-letter name yields 9, 6 and 5, the Tarotist selects the ninth

card, the sixth after that and the fifth after that. Konraad also finds utility in assigning letters to trumps. This is not entirely successful, because he uses the English alphabet: its 26 letters do not tally with the 21 trumps. Konraad's methods, however satisfactory to him, do not suggest the Tarot's original function.

Carlyle Pushong's eclecticism

Lind's writings are cited in the bibliography for Carlyle A. Pushong's book *The Tarot of the Magi* (London, 1967). The book ends by recommending the Tarot de Marseille, the Insight Institute pack and the Waite/Smith Tarot. Lind's Tarotism had some influence on Pushong's interpretations and expressions, but not as much as those of Rolla Nordic. Pushong does not mention the Nordic/Mathison Tarot, even though his illustrations consist primarily of its trumps, court cards and Aces. Pushong or his anonymous illustrator makes a few revisions, all favouring the Tarot de Marseille: the shield for the Empress bears a heraldic eagle; in Arcanum XIX, beneath the Sun is a pair of children, nearly nude; the unnumbered card is again labelled 'The Fool'. Pushong explains the Arcana as stages of initiation leading to spiritual illumination.

Pushong refers frequently to Hindu concepts, and occasionally refers to Hindu authors. The frontispiece in his book purports to show an Indian prince, 'one of the writer's Spirit Guides'. But this orientalism does not replace the usual Western Tarotism. Thus, the High Priestess sits between 'the pillars of Jakin and Boaz' (Masonic motifs), although they also symbolise 'Karma and Dharma' (Hinduism's Law and Justice). The Wheel of Fortune, despite its 'Egyptian' figures, represents the Hindus' Samsara, the round of earthly incarnations. In mingling Western esoterism with Hindu religion, Pushong can be likened to the Theosophists; indeed he borrows their ideas. Aleister Crowley had fostered this global syncretism in his interpretation of the Tarot. Crowley's terminology doubtless prompted Pushong to speak of the Enchantress as conquering 'the Gnostic Lion-Serpent'. But Pushong's Tarotism is perhaps more heavily dependent on *The Tarot* (London, 1962) by Mouni Sadhu (see [Chapter 13](#)). Like Sadhu and other heirs of Russian Tarotism, Pushong is inclined to digress. When they discuss Arcanum X, they all digress on the ten *sephiroth* of the Tree of Life. Pushong also gives parallel lists of *sephiroth*, Hebrew Names of God (transliterated into the English alphabet), classes of angels and

parts of the human body. We have seen these entries, principally in Hebrew, inscribed on the numeral cards of Frederick Holland's handmade Tarot of the 1880s (see [Chapter 2](#)).

Pushong follows Lind in the divinatory meanings for the suit cards, although he tends to prefer 'Sceptres' to 'Wands'. He assigns the suits to elements, but differs from Lind. This may be inadvertent, for he thereby contradicts Rolla Nordic too, even though he reproduces her Aces, which clearly depict Lind's correspondences. The exact correspondences have never become standard in Tarotism, as may be seen below.

	Etteilla	Papus	Mathers	Knapp	Lind	Pushong
Cup	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water
Coin	Fire	Air	Earth	Fire	Air	Earth
Sword	Air	Earth	Air	Earth	Fire	Fire
Baton	Earth	Fire	Fire	Air	Earth	Air

Pushong is said to have been clairvoyant. He attended public school under the Irish Christian Brothers, of whom he spoke fondly. During the Second World War, he served as a First Class Warrant Officer in the R.A.S.C. He worked as a journalist, schoolmaster, college lecturer and civil servant. He studied the religions of India, especially Vedantism.

Micheline Stuart's allegory

The Tarot: Path to Inner Development (Boulder and London, 1977) is a small book by Micheline Stuart. She claims to have studied for years in a school for the development of consciousness. She found the Tarot's main use to be 'the theory of man's inner evolution'. This necessitates waking up and remaining *awake*. The idea recalls the teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky. Here too is the concept that the personality comprises a multiplicity of selves. (Perhaps Gurdjieff or Ouspensky influenced the Insight Institute: we have seen that Lind followed Ouspensky in renaming Temperance.) The 1990 edition of Micheline Stuart's book has a Foreword by Helen Palmer, an author and teacher dealing with personality types as categorised by the Enneagram, a schema promoted by Gurdjieff. Palmer's Foreword explicitly says that Micheline Stuart has aligned Gurdjieff's precepts with the 'stages of human development depicted by the Tarot's higher arcana'. The text is illustrated with the Tarot de Marseille. Stuart's description of the Fool merges the image from the Tarot de Marseille with that from the Waite/Smith Tarot. This is also a peculiarity of the

Nordic/Mathison Tarot and the derivative Tarot in Pushong's book, but Micheline Stuart probably draws directly on Lind's similar discussion in *How to Understand the Tarot*. She refers to 'The Fool' and 'The Wheel of Fortune', not to Rolla Nordic's 'Magus' and 'Wheel of Life'.

The novelty of Micheline Stuart's approach is in using the trumps in descending order. This use was suggested by Court de Gébelin in 1781, but not exploited by others. The Tarot's 'path to inner development', according to Stuart, is trodden by the Fool, an ignoramus who is incapable of directing himself. The World represents Mother Nature, dominating us by negative emotions and instincts (drives that Gurdjieff explicitly identified as obstacles to a full awareness of the authentic self). The most negative card is The Black Magician, embodying those of our regressive tendencies that we are unwilling to recognise and reform. 'Death – The Reaper' is not to be taken as mortality, but as the extermination of self-indulgence. 'The Enchantress (Force – Strength)' expresses the dominance of spirit over matter. In discussing The Wheel of Fortune, Stuart refers to 'eternal recurrence', but the term is not freighted with all the meanings that Ouspensky gave it; she is referring only to the relentless fluctuation of chance – which is surely the card's original symbolism. The Hierophant and the Emperor are less highly evolved than the Empress and the High Priestess: this nicely fits Stuart's feminist societal values. The Magician is at a transcendental level where no dualities exist. Stuart gives this unity a religious aura: when perfected, we realise that our work is conferred 'from above'. To the Supreme Being, she says: 'Let Thy will be done.'¹³

Richard Gardner's 'alchemy'

Richard Gardner was born in 1927 in Northern Ireland.¹⁴ He attended Protestant schools. At the age of eight, he earned prizes in Scriptural studies. He took a special interest in Biblical symbolism. As a young man, he became an actor, performing in Dublin. He moved to England in 1959 to work as a carpenter and plumber. In his spare time he studied philosophy, religion and magic. He practised witchcraft, and found it to be a welcome antidote to the aridity and rigidity of modern science.

In about 1955 a Dutch painter named Tammo de Jongh began to theorise that human consciousness has undergone epochal shifts, as when the ancient matriarchal mentality yielded to the modern patriarchal one. He was joined by Kenneth Carter, a historian, Barry Stater, a mathematician,

and, about five years later, by Richard Gardner. Their theory maintains that humans are ruled by twelve 'aspects of consciousness' which, if properly balanced, could restore the perfect conditions of Eden. The aspects are expressed as a cast of characters; normally, each person is a blend of two or three characters. They are as follows.

Actress (water + fire)	Logician (air + fire)
Child (water + air)	Patriarch (air + water)
Enchantress (water + earth)	Observer (air + earth)
Slave (earth + fire)	Joker (fire + air)
Old Woman (earth + air)	Fool (fire + water)
Mother Nature (earth + water)	Warrior (fire + earth)

Those in the left-hand column, Gardner sees as feminine, inner-directed and dominated by the Moon, whereas those in the right-hand column are masculine, outer-directed and dominated by the Sun. Where two completely dissimilar types collide in one personality, they can be harmonised by cultivating the qualities of the type that has mediating elements. For instance, when a person is divided between the intuitive Mother Nature and the analytical Logician, they can be reconciled by the exuberance of the Fool. His wateriness connects to the feminine aspect, and his fieriness to the masculine one. Gardner referred to this system as the 'Nature of Consciousness', while de Jongh called it a 'cosmology'.¹⁵

Gardner wrote *The Purpose of Love* (London) in 1970. The book introduces his ideas about the attainment of higher consciousness through love, good will and astrology. He believes that the ancients, because of their balanced consciousness, were able discern the impact of interplanetary radiation. They used their sensitivity to practise magic, with the aim of extending consciousness. This was best attained through 'magical love-making', which balanced the masculine and feminine dynamics of the personality. This opinion resembles doctrines in the O.T.O., the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor and Randolph's Brotherhood of Eulis.

During the 1970s Gardner became a professional fortune-teller in Brighton, using the Tarot.¹⁶ His practices represent an early nexus of feminist myth and New Age therapy. He believed that intuition and sensuousness had been cultivated in the forgotten matriarchy. In modern times Western patriarchy suppresses the old values in favour of strict

intellectualism. Gardner symbolised the change in the same way as de Jongh: the rule of earth and water has yielded to the rule of air and fire. Gardner analysed his clients' personalities according to his 'alchemical' theory, and assessed their likely future experiences in a culture of air and fire.

Richard Gardner appropriated Frank Lind's Tarot (see plate 7). He gave it insipid colours – yellow, pink and pale green – and a back design that includes the initials R.G. The cards were sold in a flimsy box with the printed claim that 'the originals can be seen in the British Museum'. This can be true only if 'the originals' are simply Lind's own cards, and if they found their way into that museum despite their modernity.

Lind's trumps also appear in Gardner's *Evolution through the Tarot* (London, 1970),¹⁷ and some of them in *The Tarot Speaks* (London, 1971).¹⁸ These books contain traces of ideas from the Golden Dawn.¹⁹ Lind's terminology also appears. Gardner preserves Lind's names for cards 11 and 14, 'The Enchantress' and 'Time', respectively. However, the other trumps receive more traditional names. Gardner sometimes refers to the Fool as 'The Creator'. Gardner's books are suffused with his own ideas of higher consciousness and his hopes that lovers really will acquire it, thereby benefiting themselves and society.

CHAPTER 19

Gareth Knight and the Servants of the Light

Gareth Knight is probably the most influential living English occultist. His secular name is Basil Wilby: 'Gareth Knight' was originally adopted as a pen-name, and has become its bearer's name in magic. He was born in Colchester, Essex, on 3 April 1930, and attended Colchester Royal Grammar School; his father and mother were both Post Office clerk/telegraphists. He conceived an interest in magic in childhood; at the age of 23 he read the works of Dion Fortune, which greatly impressed him, and he joined the Society of the Inner Light which she founded and which is still in existence today. In the Society, he worked through the grades, which are similar to those of the Golden Dawn, and became its Honorary Librarian. Together with John and Mary Hall, Knight founded the Helios Book Service in late 1962 or early 1963. Its headquarters were at Cheltenham, and its aim was to supply books on esoteric subjects by mail order, and to publish books on these subjects. In about 1963, Knight met and became friends with Walter Ernest Butler (1898-1978), who had been an important member of the Society from about 1923 until 1933, when he had resigned from it. Gareth Knight's first book, his *A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, was published by Helios in 1965; another major work, *Experience of the Inner Worlds*, came out under the Helios imprint in 1975.

In 1964 the Helios Book Service began distributing a correspondence course in magic. In May of that year Ernest Butler, having recently retired from Southampton University, where he had been a laboratory technician, was co-opted to handle the course on a fee-paying basis. Gareth Knight wrote the first six lessons of the course, and Butler wrote subsequent ones; there are now some 56 lessons in all, and the course lasts for several years. By 1965, Knight had become dissatisfied with the Society of the Inner Light; he felt in part that it was coming to resemble a religious sect too closely. He therefore resigned his membership; but Ernest Butler rejoined

the Society in the same year. Gareth Knight has very recently rejoined it himself.

From the beginning of the Helios Course, voluntary supervisors guided the work of those who subscribed to it. In late 1973 the Course split off from the Helios Book Service, because the burden of running both simultaneously had become too great. It was then reorganised as an association named the Servants of the Light; all subscribers became members of the S.O.L. W.E. Butler, Michael Ashcroft-Nowicki and his wife Dolores were appointed to administer it. The Ashcroft-Nowickis live in St Helier on Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands, which became the headquarters of the S.O.L. At the present day subscribers to the S.O.L. course number some two thousand. Until his retirement in 1975, Ernest Butler was Director of Studies for the course; Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki then succeeded him, and has remained Director of Studies for the S.O.L. until this day, despite undertaking frequent lecture tours in the United States and elsewhere. Students who reach the twelfth lesson of the course are given a first-degree initiation, thereby attaining the Fellowship of the Light; after further work they pass into the House of Light and the second degree. The third and highest degree is the Fraternitas Alexandrae; membership of this is by invitation only. Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki has edited a collection of writings and lectures by W.E. Butler, under the title *Practical Magic and the Western Mystery Tradition* (1986). She has also written several books on occult subjects herself, published by the Aquarian Press, Wellingborough, including *Building a Temple* (1974), *First Steps in Ritual* (1982, 1998), *The Shining Paths* (1983), which expounds pathworking based on the Tree of Life, and *Highways of the Mind* (1987); she has devoted two books to particular Tarot packs, *The Servants of the Light Tarot* (1991) and *The Shakespearian Tarot* (1993), appearing under the same imprint.

The Servants of the Light has no organisation other than that provided by the Director of Studies and the supervisors who work under her; but in various places in North America, such as Atlanta, Denver and Vancouver, small groups of members have formed lodges to meet together and carry out communal rituals.

One of Dion Fortune's principal contributions to the tradition which she inherited from the Golden Dawn was to emphasise the importance for individual adepts of making astral contact with one or another Master.

Ernest Butler was, and Gareth Knight and Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki remain, enthusiastic adherents of this idea. In 1960 Llewellyn Publications commissioned from Gareth Knight a Tarot pack, to be designed by himself and intended to accompany his *Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism*, which it was their intention to publish. He chose the Dutch artist Sander Littel, of Dordrecht, to execute the designs for the pack; they met and from 1961 to 1962 collaborated in planning the designs. Unfortunately, in 1965 Llewellyn Publications began to experience financial difficulties, as a result of which they were unable to publish either the pack or the book at that time. Gareth Knight had to raise money to purchase the typesetting of the book from Llewellyn, and brought it out in 1965 under the Helios imprint, as already noted. The pack had to wait nearly 20 years before being issued to the public.

A Practical Guide to Qabalistic Symbolism is divided into two volumes, of which the first deals with the ten *sephiroth*, and the second with the 22 paths connecting them on the Tree of Life. In Volume I, Knight surprisingly advises his readers to study the work of L. Ron Hubbard: Scientology, he says, though no panacea, can ‘clear the decks for action quicker than most other therapies’.¹ He shows his adherence to Dion Fortune's ideas by distinguishing sharply between the ‘cosmic Christ force’ and the Lord Jesus, the Master of Compassion. The former, he says, was a blind cosmic force ‘mediated by Our Lord’ as its bearer.² In general, the attitude manifested in the book is that all religious myths and symbols – ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, classical pagan, Jewish, Hindu and Christian – incorporate the same degree of truth and have the same degree of validity. A completely different attitude is displayed in a book of Knight's published just ten years later, *Experience of the Inner Worlds*, which is resolutely Christian and in which the Christ-force doctrine is expressly repudiated.³

At the beginning of Volume II of the *Practical Guide* Knight lists the Tarot trumps in the order and with the numbering of the Tarot de Marseille, beginning with the Fool as 0: he calls trump I the Magus, trump XX the Last Judgement and trump XXI the Universe. He also gives an ‘index’ of the 22 pathways, from the 11th to the 32nd, with their associated Tarot trumps, Hebrew letters and astrological signs (the *sephiroth* themselves count as the first ten paths). Knight himself adopts Crowley's attribution of the trumps to the paths and to the letters.

Following the Golden Dawn, he interchanges Strength (XI) and Justice (VIII) so that Strength is assigned to the 19th path and the letter *Teth* and Justice to the 22nd path and the letter *Lamed*. Following Crowley, he also interchanges the Star (XVII) and the Emperor (IV), so that the Star is assigned to the 15th path and the letter *He* and the Emperor to the 28th path and the letter *Tzaddi*. But, later in the book, he objects to the practice of the Golden Dawn in actually renumbering Strength and Justice; and he particularly objects to Crowley's preservation of the zodiacal associations of trumps IV and XVII. The signs of the zodiac, he rightly says, are primarily attributed to the paths, and so must be attributed to whichever trumps are associated with them. Scattered through the volume are notes on the designs for the Tarot trumps in various different packs, the Tarot de Marseille and those designed by Wirth, the Golden Dawn, Waite, Case, Crowley, Knapp/Hall and C.C. Zain. Knight reveals the rather poor knowledge of the history of Tarot cards that he had at that time by remarking of the High Priestess that she was 'crudely Christianised as the "Female Pope" or, more jocularly, "Pope Joan" ', but that 'in Italy good taste preferred to restore her to pagan status as "Juno" '.⁴

The final section of the volume is devoted to the Tarot, but it consists mainly of accounts of attributions of the trumps to paths and Hebrew letters by various occult theorists, including Frater Achad. Knight calls the suits Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks. The designs of the Aces, court cards and numeral cards in the same versions of the Tarot as those whose trump cards were previously discussed before are described in detail.

In the years 1975 to 1977 a set of Major Arcana was designed, in collaboration with Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, by Jo Gill. Jo Gill is a descendant of Eric Gill, and was at the time living in Jersey. The cards were intended for use by the Servants of the Light; they were so used in the form of photographic slides and a few prints. Gareth Knight took Jo Gill's design for the World to illustrate the cover of his *History of White Magic*, published in 1978. Each trump bears its name at the bottom of the card together with a Hebrew letter, outside the frame of the main design, and an Arabic numeral for its number at the top of the card, again outside the frame. The numbers and Hebrew letters are assigned precisely according to the Golden Dawn attribution, with *Aleph* to the Fool, numbered 0, *Teth* to Strength, numbered 8, and *Lamed* to Justice, numbered 11; the Emperor and the Star are left in their natural places. The

names of the trumps are conventional: trump 5 is called simply 'the Priest' rather than 'the High Priest', trump 20 is called 'Judgement' and trump 21 'the World'. Jo Gill's iconography follows tradition to a large extent. The Fool steps out of a doorway, his dog awaiting him outside. The Magician wears an Egyptian headdress and holds Mercury's caduceus. The robe of the High Priestess changes at the bottom into a stream of water. The Priest is an Egyptian with a shaven head. A great angel, said by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki to be a Lord of Flame, stands above the two naked Lovers. The Chariot is drawn by its conventional sphinxes, one black and one white. The figure of Strength has the sign of infinity above her head as she opens the lion's mouth. The Wheel of Fortune is unusual – a gyroscope poised in space. Three wheels enclose a central one, which depicts the zodiac: the usual sphinx, serpent and jackal are at top, left and right respectively, while the four living creatures occupy the corners of the card. The Justice card shows Anubis enthroned between black and white pillars, with scales between his feet. On the Death card, the White Goddess dices with a skeleton Death. On the Temperance card, an angel, said by Mrs Ashcroft-Nowicki to be Raphael, sits by a pool, holding a balance. Beneath the Sun, a naked boy and girl dance ecstatically. In 1989 Mrs Ashcroft-Nowicki published *Inner Landscapes*, a set of pathworkings based on and illustrated by Jo Gill's trump cards.

The pack designed in 1962-3 by Gareth Knight and Sander Littel had to wait until 1984 to be put into public circulation as 'The Gareth Knight Tarot'. This was due to Stuart Kaplan, who took the initiative by getting in touch with Gareth Knight and suggesting publication of the pack by his company, US Games Systems. Knight approves of the explosion in the production of newly designed Tarot packs that began in the 1970s and shows no sign of abating. He believes it to be legitimate to integrate the symbolism proper to the Tarot pack with that drawn from some disparate tradition, and is himself especially drawn to Celtic and Arthurian imagery, though he does not strongly advocate its use for the Tarot. He does, however, approve of the work on these lines of John and Caitlin Matthews and of the Merlin Tarot of R.J. Stewart, issued in 1992. He gives his pupils the exercise of designing their own Tarot packs, believing this to be better for them than to accept the contents of other people's subconscious minds or esoteric theories. The Gareth Knight Tarot, which its progenitor regarded as apprentice work, made its appearance long after it had

originally been designed, and no longer represented Knight's ideas about the Tarot. He was glad to have it published, if only to provide Sander Littel with some remuneration for his work of so many years before.

The trumps of the Gareth Knight Tarot are quite different from those that Jo Gill designed in the long interval while the Knight/Littel cards awaited publication. The suits are Wands, Cups, Swords and Disks, as in the *Practical Guide*. The pack follows the Golden Dawn tradition in having, as the four court cards in each suit, a mounted King, a seated Queen, a Prince riding a chariot, and a standing Princess. The Queen of Wands is clothed in a leopard-skin cloak, and the Princess of that suit in a tiger-skin one; all the other fourteen court figures are naked. Every suit card, and not just the courts, has its rank and suit printed in full in a panel at the bottom of the card; the numeral cards also have their ranks, in Arabic numerals, at left and right of the bottom panels (the Aces are numbered 1). The trump cards likewise bear their names in a panel at the bottom, preceded by a Roman numeral (0 for the Fool); they bear no Hebrew letters. The numbering accords with the older tradition, rather than with G.D. doctrine, in assigning VIII to Justice and XI to Strength. The names of the trumps are, for an esoteric pack, entirely conventional: the Fool; the Magician; the High Priestess; the Empress; the Emperor; the Hierophant; the Lovers; the Chariot; Justice; the Hermit; Wheel of Fortune; Strength; the Hanged Man; Death; Temperance; the Devil; Lightning-Struck Tower; the Star; the Moon; the Sun; the Last Judgement; and the Universe.

The style is distinctive, but the iconography is fairly standard. The Fool, dressed as a harlequin, is being bitten in the leg by a cat, while a crocodile menaces him from the other side. The Magician has a sign of infinity above his head; on his stone table is a chalice, into which he points with a lance, while in front of it he holds a sword with his other hand: the symbolism is Arthurian. The High Priestess, wearing the crown of Isis, sits between two pillars holding a book; at her feet is the moon and all about her water. The Empress holds an orb and sceptre; a crescent moon and a shield bearing a two-headed eagle are at her feet. The Emperor is a grim figure, bearded and helmeted, seated and holding an orb; a wand surmounted by a star rests in the crook of his arm. The Hierophant appears to be a Pope, seated on a throne and raising a hand in benediction; two tonsured figures face him. The Lovers card shows a young woman watching two crowned figures approaching her; Cupid hovers above with

his bow and arrow. A warlike figure rides in the Chariot, which is drawn by two sphinxes, one black and one brown. Justice has her usual attributes of sword and scales. The Hermit carries a serpent-headed staff and a lantern. The Wheel of Fortune, however, is unusual. In place of a wheel are three concentric circles, the outer one bearing the signs of the zodiac, the next the symbols of the planets, and the inmost one divided into four differently coloured quadrants, with a rose and a cross at the centre. A sphinx surmounts the outermost circle, while on one side is the jackal Anubis and on the other a snake. Shown by heads only, the four living creatures, or symbols of the four Evangelists, occupy the corners of the card. Strength, with a symbol of infinity above her head, opens the mouth of a lion. The Hanged Man is suspended by one foot from a gibbet in the familiar way; his hands are bound behind his back, and his yellow hair spreads like rays from a sun. Death is a skeleton reaper. Temperance, winged and dressed in a long tunic bearing a hexagram, pours from one vessel to another; the left-hand side of the card shows the night-time moon over the waters, the right-hand side the sun shining upon a landscape. The Devil is a horrifying winged goat-headed figure with bird's claws for feet and a black and a white snake entwined about a staff which reaches his waist; a man and a woman stand naked, chained by the neck to the rock on which the Devil stands. From the Tower two crowned figures fall headlong. The Star shows the usual naked girl pouring from two vessels into a stream which terminates at a tree surmounted by an ibis: seven small stars and one great one shine in the sky. The Moon card has all the details from the Tarot de Marseille version – crayfish, dogs and buildings beneath a full-faced Moon. The Sun shines on two naked children; the wall behind them is adorned with sunflowers. A great angel summons figures rising from their graves to the Judgement. The Universe is represented by a woman draped with a scarf and holding one black and one white baton, and enclosed in an oval wreath; the four living creatures again occupy the corners of the card.

In each suit, the suit-signs are arranged in differing ways on the different numeral cards. The chariots of the Princes are drawn by the four living creatures of the Apocalypse, which symbolise the Evangelists (or beasts corresponding to them): that of Swords by an angel, that of Wands by a lion, that of Cups by an eagle and that of Disks by a bull. The Queen of Swords holds a severed human head, and the Princess of Swords holds the

severed head of Medusa. The Princess of Cups stands in a lake with lily-pads, with a swan floating on the water and a dolphin swimming in it. Most of the Disks in that suit bear crosses, but that of the King bears a hexagram, and that of the Princess a pentagram. The Sword on the Ace is not held by a hand, but its blade is encircled by a crown. From the top of the Wand on the Ace descends a lightning flash. The Cup on the Ace of that suit is a chalice whose rim is inscribed with the signs of the zodiac, into which a dove descends. The Disk on the Ace has again four differently coloured quadrants, with a cross and a rose in the centre. The suit cards do not have their meanings inscribed on them, but an accompanying booklet supplies them. They conform entirely to the Golden Dawn system.⁵

In 1986 Gareth Knight brought out a new book on the Tarot, *The Treasure House of Images: an Introduction to the Magical Dynamics of the Tarot*. In 1991 Knight returned to the subject in *The Magical World of the Tarot: Fourfold Mirror of the Universe*, also published by the Aquarian Press. The first of the two books expounds what he sees as the magical dynamics of the Tarot; the second deals with the Tarot as a four-fold system which can be grasped independently of the Tree of Life of the Cabala. In both books, Gareth Knight appears as a very relaxed exponent of the esoteric Tarot. *The Treasure House of Images* contains an accurate history of the Tarot pack; Knight considers it important for occultists to know the true history of the Tarot, and to be familiar with different early versions of the trumps. But knowing that for four and a half centuries the Tarot pack was used exclusively for card games in no way diminishes his perception of it as ‘a system of symbols to which are linked evocative images that portray archetypes of an inner reality located behind the external world’.⁶ How it came about that the inventors of an instrument of play should have hit on images with so powerful a resonance he does not seek to explain, merely referring vaguely to ‘the inventive genius of whoever selected the series of Tarot images’.⁷

He is equally relaxed about the interpretation of the Tarot. Though he mentions a number of books that readers may find helpful, he repeatedly assures them that they will do best to work with the Tarot and find that understanding of it that it suggests to them, and urges them to ignore the manifold contradictions to be encountered in the voluminous Tarot literature. Likewise, although he himself strongly favours linking the Tarot

to the Cabala, he counsels his readers that the ‘Qabalistic framework is not essential’.⁸

Knight uses traditional names for the Tarot trumps: ‘the Magician’ for trump I, ‘Strength’ rather than ‘Fortitude’, ‘the Last Judgement’ rather than ‘the Judgement’ and ‘the High Priestess’ rather than ‘the Popess’, but varies between ‘the Pope’ and ‘the Hierophant’ and between ‘the World’ and ‘the Universe’. He mentions the ancient names ‘Love’ in place of ‘the Lovers’, ‘the Traitor’ in place of ‘the Hanged Man’ and ‘the Gate of Hell’ in place of ‘the Tower’, and is particularly impressed by the fact that the original significance of the Hermit was as Father Time. Aware of the existence of divergent traditional orders for the trumps, he keeps to the Tarot de Marseille order, without interchanging Justice and Strength. In his books, he calls the suits Wands, Cups, Swords and Coins. He sees a four-fold structure as underlying the Tarot, and lays down the correspondences:

Swords	Air	Man/Angel	East	Dawn	Spring
Wands	Fire	Lion	South	Noon	Summer
Cups	Water	Eagle	West	Dusk	Autumn
Coins	Earth	Ox/Bull	North	Midnight	Winter

The Fool is the Lord of the Dance, and in command of the whole series of trumps; the Magician is a second, though antithetical, aspect of the Fool. The three Virtues, together with the World, which Knight is disposed to see as representing the missing cardinal virtue of Prudence, are each in charge of a quaternary of trumps, and also of one of the suits. Strength is in charge of Wands, and of the Hierophant, Emperor, Empress and High Priestess; Temperance is in charge of Cups, and of the Lovers, the Chariot, the Hermit and the Wheel of Fortune; Justice is in charge of Swords, and of the Hanged Man, Death, the Devil and the Tower; and the World is in charge of Coins, and of the Star, the Moon, the Sun and the Last Judgement. The structure of the Tarot, Knight asserts, ‘is a model of the universe, and therefore also of the soul of man’.⁹ The ‘therefore’ of this sentence requires an implicit acceptance of the Hermetic doctrine of the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm; but the main difficulty with all such propositions is that, if correct, they would surely have suggested a quite different placing of the Virtues in the trump order than any actually known in any of the divergent traditions concerning the places they ought to occupy.

The Treasure House of Images is mainly concerned to recommend the practice of 'pathworking', which, Knight says, is a development and simplification of the Golden Dawn technique of 'scrying in the spirit vision'. He explains that it is a method of astral travelling, but *not* of astral projection. The astral traveller remains conscious of his body, whereas astral projection involves dissociation from the body, and, in Knight's view, is rather dangerous. Pathworking, an exercise frequently advocated by Dion Fortune, consists in visualising oneself making a journey along the paths of the Tree of Life, and encountering on the way the figures of the Tarot trumps associated with the paths between the *sephiroth* along which one passes. Evidently, however, it is possible for those who know little of the Cabala, but are familiar with the Tarot, to engage in this practice. *The Treasure House of Images* also recommends the use of ritual, and describes a sample ceremony with twelve ritual officers but, characteristically, no set forms of words. The book represents divination by means of the Tarot as a ritual act performed by just two people: it should be undertaken with seriousness, in subdued lighting, with perhaps a pinch of incense. *The Magical World of the Tarot* gives more attention to Tarot readings; some of the sample readings described use the Celtic spread popularised by A.E. Waite in *The Key to the Tarot*, and some a 21-card spread invented by Gareth Knight himself.

In 1986 Aquarian Press applied to publish a complete Servants of the Light Tarot, with designs for the Minor Arcana added to Jo Gill's designs for the trumps. Jo Gill, who had married and left Jersey, was unable to undertake the work, so Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki commissioned Anthony Clark, who had already produced the Magickal Tarot, to carry it out. He did so in a very different style from Jo Gill's Major Arcana; the completed pack was published in 1991, together with the booklet by Mrs Ashcroft-Nowicki. In the booklet, she assigns elements, planets and signs of the zodiac to the trump cards in accordance with the system followed by the Golden Dawn: air, water and fire respectively to the Fool, the Hanged Man and Judgement, the three cards to which the mother letters are assigned; the planets to the cards to which the seven double letters are assigned; and the signs of the zodiac to the remaining cards to which the twelve simple letters are assigned. In addition, she allots a numerical value of 3 to each card associated with a mother letter, of 9 to one associated with a double letter and of 12 to one associated with a simple letter. The names of the

four suits in Clark's Minor Arcana are Weapons (for Swords), Staves, Crescents (for Cups) and Spheres (for Coins); these are made to correspond respectively to Fire, Air, Water and Earth (more usually, Swords correspond to Air and Batons or Wands to Fire). The court cards, from King down to Page or Jack, become the Maker, Giver, User and Keeper; the Aces become Primes. Each suit card has its rank and suit written in full at the bottom of the card, outside the frame; and each of the numeral cards shows a picture, after the manner of the Waite-Smith pack. Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki assigns a numerical value of 4 to each Maker, Giver and User, of 7 to each Keeper, and of 5 to each Prime.

An important associate of Gareth Knight was William G. Gray (1913-1992). Gray's mother was a professional astrologer and through her he had some early contact with occultists. He joined the British Army as a communications technician, and served some years in Egypt. In the Second World War, he was in action in France and was brought back to Britain in the great rescue operation from Dunkirk. His health was affected badly enough for him to be discharged from the army soon after the War. He turned to occult studies and met Gareth Knight in about 1964. Knight was still a member of the Society of the Inner Light and encouraged him to take the Society's introductory study course by correspondence. When Gray arrived at the Society's headquarters, there happened to be a Nigerian on the door, which displeased Gray, who had racist prejudices. He did allow himself to be admitted as a member of the Society, but resigned almost immediately afterwards.

Described by Knight as a somewhat irascible man, Gray studied the various occult systems, but rejected them all and devised one of his own. He remained unknown until Gareth Knight encouraged him to write. In 1968 and 1969 respectively, Knight published Gray's first two books, *The Ladder of Lights* and *Magical Ritual Methods*, with Helios. From the time of the publication of these first two books, Gray became a fairly prolific writer: his *Inner Traditions of Magic* appeared with the Aquarian Press in 1970, and *The Tree of Evil* with Helios in 1974. In the 1970s and 1980s, Gray built up a considerable following in Britain, the United States and South Africa. He lived with his wife Bobbie, who was another professional astrologer, in the West country, where he practised as a chiropodist; she died two weeks after him.

The Ladder of Lights is not concerned with the Tarot, but *Magical Ritual Methods* devotes a chapter to it.¹⁰ Gray decided that the numbering from 11 to 32 of the pathways between the *sephiroth* followed by the Golden Dawn needed to be slightly revised; these had been derived from Athanasius Kircher – see fig. 5 in [Chapter 0](#). As explained in [Chapter 0](#), the pathways between the *sephiroth* may be designated by the numbers of the two *sephiroth* they connect, that of the higher, and hence lower-numbered, *sephira*, first. In Gray's numbering of the pathways, as in Kircher's, a pathway starting from a given *sephira* always precedes those starting from higher-numbered *sephiroth*: thus, both in Kircher's numbering and in Gray's, pathway 1-3 is the 12th, and pathway 2-3 the 14th. Gray renumbered them so that, of two pathways with the same starting-point, that which ended with the lower-numbered *sephira* would have the lower number. On this principle he interchanged pathway 2-6, which had been the 15th, with pathway 2-4, which had been the 16th; similarly he interchanged pathway 3-6, which had been the 17th, with pathway 3-5, formerly numbered the 18th, and pathway 6-9, which had been the 25th, with pathway 6-8, formerly numbered the 26th.

This was the least of Gray's departures from occult tradition concerning the Tree of Life. Though acknowledging the standard attribution to the pathways of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as sound, he considered an attribution of English letters more helpful to English speakers; omitting the vowels A, E, I, O and U on the somewhat inconsistent ground that vowels do not occur in an unpointed Hebrew text, but adding Th at the end as representing the letter 'thorn' used in Anglo-Saxon, he assigned the letters B, C and so on in alphabetical order to the pathways in their numerical order. A diagram of the Tree of Life showing the pathways with Gray's numbering and attributions of 'English' letters appeared on p. 6 of his *The Tree of Evil* (1974).

We have still not surveyed the full extent of Gray's heterodoxy, for he held that the existent numbering of the Tarot trumps should be totally ignored,¹¹ and propounded a wholly revised association between them and the pathways. His idea in doing so was that, under the Golden Dawn attribution, which he took to be the traditional one, the trump subjects are not intermediate between, and do not connect, the pair of *sephiroth* which form the ends of the pathways they are thus associated with. His utterly altered attribution is perplexing, since the original ground for associating

the Tarot with the Cabala at all was the correspondence claimed between the 22 trumps and the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and only thereby with the pathways on the Tree of Life. Gray's system of correspondences between pathways, letters and Tarot trumps is as follows:

Number of path	Between <i>sephiroth</i>	English letter	Tarot trump
11	1-2	B	the Hierophant
12	1-3	C	the Hermit
13	1-6	D	the Star
14	2-3	F	the Judgement
15	2-4	G	the Emperor
16	2-6	H	Temperance
17	3-5	I	Death
18	3-6	K	the Hanged Man
19	4-5	L	Justice
20	4-6	M	Strength
21	4-7	P	the Empress
22	5-6	Q	the Tower
23	5-8	R	the Devil
24	6-7	S	the Lovers
25	6-8	T	the Chariot
26	6-9	V	the Sun
27	7-8	W	the Wheel of Fortu
28	7-9	X	the Priestess
29	7-10	Y	the World
31	8-10	Z	the Fool
32	9-10	Th	the Moon

Gray later expounded this system in a book called *Concepts of Qabalah* which he published in the USA. in 1984; in 1997 the book was posthumously published in a revised form as *Qabalistic Concepts: Living the Tree*. The book formed the text of a course he had given in the USA. Having stated the standard occult association of Hebrew letters to pathways according to the G.D. numbering of the pathways, it goes on to expound his allocation of 'English' letters in accordance with his new style of numbering. Each Path between Spheres (*sephiroth*), Gray says, can be regarded as a blend of the two Spheres it connects: thus the 19th Path, from 4 *Chesed* = Mercy to 5 *Geburah* = Might, in Gray's nomenclature, though more usually called 'Severity', represents 'Merciful Might'.¹² In the chapter on the Tarot, Gray gives far more detailed reasons for his attributions of trumps to pathways than does *Magical Ritual Methods*, His reasons have all to do with the suitability of the trump subjects to the two Spheres that each pathway connects; under the traditional or G.D. attribution, they quite fail to express a blend between those two qualities. The numbering of the trumps he treats as entirely irrelevant.

Like Gareth Knight, Gray regards the Tarot as a four-fold structure. He calls the suits Rods (for Wands), Cups, Swords and Shields (for Coins), and associates them in the usual way with Fire, Water, Air and Earth. In *Magical Ritual Methods*, the court figures are called simply King, Queen, Knight and Page, and correspond respectively to Fire, Water, Air and Earth. In *Concepts of the Qabalah*, the two lower court figures have become Prince and Princess. Cups are said to represent something glad, Swords something sad, Shields or Coins something earned and Rods something learned: the significance of the *sephira* corresponding to the value of a numeral card is to be modified by that one of these qualities which its suit represents. Gray provides a one-word interpretation of every one of the Minor Arcana.

In the later part of his life, William Gray spent a good deal of time in the United States, lecturing and giving courses in the Cabala and other branches of magic. A wealthy citizen of Dallas, Texas, the late Carr P. Collins, Jr., had a high opinion of Gray. Collins created a Sangreal Foundation, which he used as a trust to support various esoteric activities that appealed to him. Gray then proceeded to found a Sangreal Sodality, which now has branches in Cheltenham, New York State, Miami, Johannesburg and Brazil. The fundamental belief of the Sangreal Sodality is, in Gray's words, that

at some uncertain point of our very remote prehistory, an entirely new type of consciousness came to this planet and commenced a breeding program among the then animalistic humanoids, which has since completely changed them into the beings we have now become. That was the beginning of our civilization, accounting for all our evolutionary trends, and is still impelling our species towards some unknown ultimate and obviously very superior state of spiritual existence quite apart from this particular planet this influence has been called the *Sangreal*, which is synonymous with Blood-Royal, and later the fabulous "Holy Grail".^{[13](#)}

These superior beings may have arrived by spaceship, or may have had no bodies, being 'pure energy held together by concentrated consciousness', or may even have been viruses.^{[14](#)} in any case their intelligence was far in advance of ours today.

In 1988 Gray published *The Sangreal Tarot*, a contribution to the doctrine of the Sodality and not, as might be guessed from the title, a description of some newly designed Tarot pack. Gray displays the usual

disdain of the occultist for mere fortune-telling: ‘the primary purpose of the Tarot’, he tells us

is not for fortune telling, but for deepening, sensitizing, and refining ordinary consciousness so we can reach a range beyond average awareness.^{[15](#)}

Gray stresses the intimate connection of the Tarot with the Cabala, and expounds his idiosyncratic association of Tarot trumps and of English consonants, including Th, with the Paths between the *sephiroth*; the latter are now designated ‘Concepts’, and the traditional term ‘Severity’ for *Geburah* is restored. As before, the suits are named Rods, Cups, Swords and Shields; Gray remarks that Wands is a misnomer for the first of these. They correspond as before to the four elements. In each suit, the numeral cards from Ace to 10 correspond to the like-numbered sphere or Concept, seen from a different angle according to the suit. The court cards are called King, Queen, Knight and Page, although Gray says that the Page may be of either sex. He attaches small importance to them, suggesting, quite falsely, that they ‘were added late in the evolution of the tarot’;^{[16](#)} they merely represent different human types.

The cards of the Tarot pack can be represented on a diagram special to the Sangreal, the Quartered Cross. Fifteen concentric circles are divided into four quadrants by an upright cross with equal arms: Cups lie on the upper arm, Shields on the right arm, Rods on the lower arm and Swords on the left arm. In each suit, the Ace lies in the innermost circle and the cards from 2 to King in successive circles towards the periphery. The four quadrants are numbered clockwise, beginning with that on the upper right between Cups and Shields, but called the quadrant of Cups; similarly for the other three suits. From the first quadrant to the fourth, they are said to represent entering earth, learning life, overcoming obstacles and anguishing adventures respectively. Of the trumps, the Fool is placed at the top, outside the periphery, and Strength, as representing energy, at the intersection of the arms of the cross. The remaining twenty trumps are placed in the outermost circle, five to a quadrant. In the first quadrant, proceeding clockwise, are the Star, the Sun, the Moon, the Lovers and the World; in the second, the Chariot, the Emperor, the Empress, the Hierophant and the Priestess; in the third, the Magician, the Wheel, Justice, the Judgement and the Devil; and in the fourth the Tower, the Hanged Man, Death, the Hermit and Temperance. No reason is given for

this arrangement. In the Sangreal system, the trumps are associated with the same letters as on the Tree of Life, save that Strength, associated with M, and the Fool, associated with Z, both have U as an alternative value; Shields, Swords, Rods and Cups are associated respectively with the vowels A, E, I and O. Gray indicates various exercises that may be performed with Tarot cards: meditating on them, asking them serious questions and so forth. He also describes the journey of the Fool through the Tarot pack, an idea that has become very popular during the past decade.

William Gray was probably the most original, but also the most eccentric, of Gareth Knight's magical associates.

A follower of Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki, Emily Peach, dedicated to her her first book, published in 1984 with Aquarian Press as *The Tarot Workbook*, and reissued in 1990 as *Discover Tarot*. She followed it in 1988 with *Tarot for Tomorrow*, reissued in 1991 as *Tarot Prediction*. In both his books on the Tarot, Gareth Knight recommends both of Emily Peach's books to his readers. Emily Peach calls the suits Wands, Cups, Swords and Pentacles, but is perhaps unique among occult writers on the Tarot in referring to trumps 2 and 5 as the Papess and the Pope. She follows the Golden Dawn in numbering Strength or Fortitude 8 and Justice 11. *The Tarot Workbook* is an instruction book for beginners. Both it and *Tarot for Tomorrow* include a very great deal about the Cabala: it is a product of that school, now perhaps becoming old-fashioned, which believes that a thorough knowledge of latter-day Cabalism is essential to a mastery of the Tarot.

PART VI

MYSTERIES FOR THE MASSES

CHAPTER 20

Eden Gray and the Waite/Smith Tarot

The Waite/Smith Tarot in America

The Waite/Smith Tarot became the standard pack among Tarotists. The cards and Waite's Tarot book were available from the original publisher, Rider and Sons, in London. Among the American distributors was the Church of Light in its early days. Waite's *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot* (1911) was pirated, as *The Illustrated Key to the Tarot* (Chicago, 1916), by Dr L.W. de Laurence.¹ His illustrations consist entirely of Pamela Colman Smith's cards, but not in their true colours: the black and white drawings are merely touched with grey tones and accents of yellow. In some later editions, the yellow is replaced with red; in others, no colour accents appear. The same publishers, de Laurence and Scott, issued the corresponding cards as usable packs. They were available into the 1960s.

In 1941 Muriel Bruce Hasbrouck wrote *The Pursuit of Destiny* (New York),² which is illustrated by cards from the Waite/Smith Tarot. Hasbrouck is primarily interested in the Minor Arcana. It seems that she wished to find some astrological system separate from the zodiac. She encountered the Golden Dawn's 'Book T' and accepted its teaching that the Tarot's numeral cards (minus the Aces) were symbols of the 36 decans. The decans indeed were originally independent of the zodiac, having been devised by Egyptian priests long before the Chaldeans derived their twelve signs from the constellations. Hasbrouck apparently did not know her subject even to this extent, for she dismisses the notion that the Tarot's content could have originated in Egypt. She does, however, accept Paul Case's story about the Tarot's invention in mediaeval Fez. She neglected to search for systems of decans older and more authentic than Mathers', but consumed his information wholesale, ignoring the fact that he blends the decans with unrelated symbolism, such as numerology and the ten *sephiroth*.

Muriel Hasbrouck uses the 'Book T' as a basic reference, and treats the cards as if they really were pages in a fixed sequence. She urges the reader to consult that card which, as a decan, covers the reader's date of birth. The reward is a page or two allegedly revealing something about the enquirer's personality. Hasbrouck gives no instructions for shuffling and reading cards, and does not explain why they exist as a pack of cards at all. Her research consisted principally of reading Israel Regardie's books on the doctrines of the Golden Dawn. She also consulted Crowley and Case, the two other men who revealed the Order's secret teachings.

Also available today is 'Zolar's New Astrological Tarot' (New York, 1963). It has 56 cards, with faces on both sides. The cartomancer can construct a set of suit cards, comparable to Waite's Minor Arcana, but with side margins containing French suit-signs and with end margins containing divinatory inscriptions. While two of the cards' reverse faces are blank, the rest provide Waite's Major Arcana and 'Zolar's Astrological Deck', which consists of 32 cards laden with zodiacal, planetary and numerological allusions. The Tarot imagery is in black and white.³ In 1968 Tarot Productions (Los Angeles) printed 'Tarot Cards – New Colour Deluxe Edition', which revises the Waite/Smith cards by giving them stronger hues and a new colour scheme, as conceived by Frankie Albano.⁴ Tarot Productions printed the pack in a miniature version (63 x 42 millimetres).⁵

Dr Leo L. Martello (1931-2000) practised witchcraft and advocated its legal rights as a legitimate religion. Although he did not insist that the Tarot originated amongst witches, he wrote *Understanding the Tarot* (New York, 1972), illustrated by the Waite/Smith pack in black and white.⁶ He gives the oracular significance of each card; for the numeral cards, he also gives a mnemonic rhyme, and explains the meanings of various combinations of cards in a spread. He summarises the major theories of the Tarot's genesis, taking seriously the legend that Fez was the Tarot's birthplace. In 1964, he says, he was in Fez and unsuccessfully attempted to trace the Tarot's origin. He mentions, without further comment, the existence of the 'Royal Fez Moroccan Tarot', which in fact originated in the 1950s. It was drawn by British artist Michael Hobdell, commissioned by barrister Roland Berrill (better known as one of the founders of Mensa, a group for persons with high intelligence quotients). Hobdell's ink drawings depend heavily on the Waite/Smith Tarot.⁷

Many other reworkings of the Waite/Smith pack have appeared, including Jessie Burns Parke's adaptation for the BOTA Tarot (see [Chapter 16](#)), and Ruth Blighton's adaptation of the BOTA Tarot for the Holy Order of MANS (see [Chapter 17](#)).⁸ More obscure is the set of illustrations that Dale Phillips prepared for David Hoy's book, *The Meaning of Tarot* (Nashville and London, 1971). Its contour sketches are more confident and uncluttered than Pamela Colman Smith's drawings. Phillips transforms the face of the Emperor into a portrait of David Hoy (see plate 8). Hoy's text is interesting for its blend of influences, from Éliphas Lévi, Aleister Crowley, Paul Case and Eden Gray. Bea Nettles, in 1970, began creating the Mountain Dream Tarot (1975), in which Pamela Smith's cards were rendered as photographs featuring Bea Nettles and her friends. A revised edition appeared in 2001.

Echoes of the Waite/Smith Tarot could reverberate in books that entirely lacked illustrations, because authors often articulated its exact imagery. It stands behind the 78 cards described by Sidney Bennett in *Tarot for the Millions* (Los Angeles, 1967), a basic guide to Tarot cartomancy. The same imagery occurred in popular anthologies that associated the Tarot with ancient esoterica and other curiosities. For instance, a description of the Waite/Smith Tarot, although not identified as such, occupies the last chapter in Raymond Buckland's *A Pocket Guide to the Supernatural* (New York, 1969). He relies superficially on B.I. Rákóczi,⁹ S.L. Mathers, A.E. Waite, P.F. Case and Eden Gray.

Eden Gray: childhood

Eden Gray was originally known as Priscilla Pardridge, born in Chicago on 9 June 1901.¹⁰ She was the daughter of Florence (née Myers) and Albert Jerome Pardridge, a dealer in real estate. The Pardridges' properties included the noted Garrick Theatre, and Priscilla frequently attended plays there. She regarded the dramatic arts as preferable to any world valued by the adults.

Priscilla attended Wykeham Rise, a boarding school in Washington, Connecticut. She had indicated an interest in Christian Science, but her school required Episcopalian worship. This duty at least allowed for a pleasant outing to the church, which was frequented by artists, who had improved the decor with their own carvings and paintings. Priscilla's

enjoyment of theatre now extended to the other visual arts too. Unfortunately these interests did not impress her teachers, and when her classmates graduated, she did not.

Back in Chicago, Priscilla disdained the duties expected of her as a debutante, instead taking a position as a store clerk. However, this stint as a member of the working class did not long resist family pressure, and she soon enrolled in a drama school on Michigan Avenue. She visited the bohemian Dill Pickle Club, where she heard a recitation by an aspiring young poet, Lester Cohen. The two vowed to meet in New York, where they both wished to work creatively, one day.

Marriage

Priscilla's elders disapproved of Lester's youth and his Jewish heritage.¹¹ After a bitter quarrel with her parents, she packed her trunk, sold a piece of jewellery, pilfered her little brother's piggybank, and hastened to New York. She took refuge in a hotel near Fifth Avenue. However, she could not elude her mother, who had been born in New Jersey and knew New York. She arrived within a few days, and succeeded in transplanting the fugitive to a special boarding house for young women in the arts. Priscilla was left with only meagre funds and no gainful employment. She would not abandon her dream, which was to see her name 'in lights'. She legally assumed the name Eden Gray – a stage-name that was memorable, attractive and short enough to fit nicely on any theatre marquee. Her new roommates advised her of their own means of earning money while awaiting an opportunity on Broadway: acting in films. The 'moving picture' industry had established production studios in the Bronx (the northernmost borough of New York City) and in nearby Fort Lee, New Jersey. There, Eden was engaged as an 'extra', hired on a daily basis to play minor roles, not usually listed in the film credits. She did not neglect live theatre, often watching rehearsals of plays directed by the influential David Belasco (1853-1931), who was noted for his expertise as an actor, stage manager, writer, producer and director, and also owned the famous Belasco Theatre, just off Broadway. He hired Eden Gray for a 'walk-on' part.

Eden received no support from her family, but wanted to make her own way in the New York theatre. It was not long before Lester Cohen arrived in New York, and, within a few days, he and Eden married. They were both

nineteen years old. Eden had defied her parents, and forever alienated them. Albert Pardridge once attended a performance by his daughter, but avoided speaking to her. One of her best roles was as Angela, the artist's model in E.J. Mayer's *The Firebrand*, a romance about Benvenuto Cellini. The villain in the piece was played by the young Edward G. Robinson. The play opened at the Morosco Theatre on 15 October 1924, and ran for a full season. Eden subsequently found herself working with many prominent actors, including Katherine Cornell, Helen Hayes, Alfred Lundt and Frederick March.

Cohen, meanwhile, pursued writing. He completed a script, *Oscar Wilde*, which appealed to David Belasco. But Belasco decided not to stage it, because friends thought it too controversial in its open treatment of homosexuality.¹² Cohen was obliged to divert his talents to writing advertising copy. In his own time, however, he wrote a novel, *Sweepings*, the chronicle of a Chicago magnate enmeshed in his business while estranged from his family. The magnate's giant emporium was obviously modelled on Hillman's, the department store owned by Eden's paternal grandfather. The book, published in 1926, was an immediate success – although presumably not so well received by Lester's in-laws. In the same year, he and Eden had a son, named Peter Gray Cohen. In 1927, Lester finished a sequel to his first novel. The new book, *The Great Bear*, was another best seller, and *Sweepings* was soon translated into German.¹³ Lester was invited to Hollywood to write dialogue for the movies, where he helped to create the screenplay for *Of Human Bondage* (1934) at RKO Radio Pictures. Eden secured minor roles with the local studios. The couple socialised but little with the community of actors, more with the writers. Lester and Eden embarked on a trip around the world. Their experiences resulted in another book, *Two Worlds* (New York, 1936). (The title refers to the developing alignment of powerful nations as either capitalistic or communistic.)

In 1936 the Cohens withdrew to idyllic Bucks County, Pennsylvania. They purchased a stone farmhouse; it had antique charm but no electrical wiring or modern plumbing. Eden and her son became proficient at raising pedigree goats and gathering wild berries. She supplied cheese and strawberries to favoured New Yorkers. Lester's career in writing occasionally called the Cohens back to California. Young Peter managed

to cope with a peripatetic education. When he graduated, the nation was engaged in the Second World War, and he was inducted into the US Army.

During the war, Eden exercised her typically strong will. She became a Red Cross worker, then trained as a nurse's aide. Although she was now in her forties, she joined the Army and became a laboratory technician, serving mainly at Newport News, Virginia. She perceived that her identity, in adulthood, had been defined largely as an appendage to her husband, while she wanted to be identified for her own worth. Her marriage ended in divorce. Peter, who had emerged as a talented artist, painted a portrait of his mother in those years. Hers is the likeness of a woman still poised and beautiful, but pensive.

Independence

Eden Gray's life was marked by the radical changes in post-war society. In the university town of West Lafayette, Indiana, she became a doctor's assistant, and bought a duplex house, which permitted her to rent space to college students. Now with contacts at Purdue University, she found employment with their radio station. She greatly enjoyed her work as a writer and director of children's programmes. She became adept at conveying and editing information. On a summer vacation, she took a guided tour of Europe: upon reaching Paris, she left the group, and stayed for a year performing in radio dramas. When she returned to her home in Indiana, national politics unexpectedly impinged on her private life. Senator Joseph McCarthy had begun his hysterical vendetta against the Communist Party. Eden Gray belonged to a veterans' society that was alleged to have included a Communist sympathiser; the inquisitors deemed this sufficient to discredit the entire group, and Purdue's administrators now refused to reinstate her. She felt prepared to defend herself in court, but no lawyer was willing to plead her case. She then claimed her entitlement as a US Army veteran and enrolled at the university to study literature. Soon recognised for her writing skills, she was honoured in a ceremony where she shared the dais with the same officials who had previously blocked her employment.

Eden Gray had not forsaken a career as an actress. In the 1950s she moved back to New York, where she hoped to find another opening in a play. She was alone and lonely. One acquaintance was receptive to a deeper friendship with her – on the condition that they attend church

services together. Eden was reluctant at first, but when it turned out that the church focused on metaphysics, she was pleasantly surprised by a religion which favoured philosophical speculation over dogma, and in which personal meditation was encouraged. One mental exercise involved visualisation: the aspirant repeatedly pictures the events deemed most fulfilling in the future. Eden Gray had aspired to see her name on a theatre marquee. This hope would seem to have faded out of realistic expectation. Then, unbidden, a producer offered her the lead role in a stage play in London. When she arrived there, her hopes were dashed. She herself discovered that the play had been plagiarised. The true author would not relinquish the rights to the story, and the producer mounted a different production. Eden could help behind the scenes, but the cast was to consist entirely of black actors. However, the success of the production allowed for yet another venture. Now Eden Gray was given the principal part. The play had only a short run, because its theme of human suffering was not well timed for audiences in post-war London. Nevertheless, the name of Eden Gray did at last appear in lights.

The New Thought Movement

Eden Gray returned to New York and her metaphysical studies. She was convinced of the efficacy of her new beliefs, but she was not sure how to make a living – until her minister at the Church of Religious Science suggested that her knowledge of metaphysics could itself apply to a career. She had become conversant with the literature in the field and therefore could retail specialised texts. She began to circulate a catalogue and fill orders by mail. Her customers were enthusiastic; some, too eager to deal through the postal system, even came directly to her office. She decided to open a shop where she could meet all her patrons in person, and in 1954 she established Inspiration House, first housed across from the Pierpont Morgan Library and later behind Carnegie Hall.

Eden delved into various branches of New Thought, including Religious Science, Divine Science and the Unity Church. All these movements teach that the human spirit emanates from the Divine Spirit. Its manifestation seems obscure in our material sphere because the human senses normally operate only on this level, one of ‘low vibration’. Higher perceptions are available through meditation and prayer. These are essentially the tenets of Renaissance Platonism, revived in the context of XX-century Western

culture. Christianity remains a vital part of the movement, yet the image of Christ assumes a mystical aspect: not only can we model our morality on His, we can regard our very selves as part of the Godhead and can draw on that power in daily life. Eden's childhood contact with Christian Science was relevant again, as she came to believe that all kinds of healing – physical, mental and spiritual – can be achieved if we regard ourselves as manifestations of God. She became well known as a teacher and counsellor, corresponding with the College of Divine Metaphysics (Cincinnati, Ohio); in 1958 she received the degree of doctor of divinity.

Dr Gray advertised her bookshop on a radio station, WOR, in New York. She helped to sponsor 'Long John' (John Neville), the host of an all-night programme about psychism, spiritual mysteries and paranormal phenomena. He was seeking participants who could lend variety to the show and give him some respite during the broadcasts and asked Eden Gray to help in inviting and interviewing guests. One of these was Gertrude Moakley, a librarian at the New York Public Library, who was researching a Renaissance Tarot partly conserved at the Pierpont Morgan Library. She later published her original interpretation of the Tarot's symbolism, based not on occult fantasy but on themes well known to art historians.¹⁴

Dr Gray was engaged in her own study of the Tarot. Tarot divination had become the subject of evening classes that she taught in her home. She knew, from talking to patrons at the bookshop, that many were frustrated by the deliberate obscurity of the Tarot books commonly available to the public. She decided to publish a clear and concise compendium of her own. The writing occupied many weekends at her cottage on Lake Byron, in Westchester County, New York. She meditated specifically on the cards designed by Pamela Colman Smith. Her son Peter, now working in New York, conceived the format and diagrams for the book. The result was *The Tarot Revealed* (New York, 1960), published by Inspiration House. Eden Gray's accomplishment led her to publish other books under the same aegis. Meanwhile she was also presenting another radio broadcast – her own programme called 'Blueprints for Living' – on station WNCN-FM. It was broadcast five times a week for four years until 1964.

After ten years of running her bookshop, Dr Gray began to wish for a change of scene, especially when the shop suffered armed robbery for the second time. She agreed with her son and his wife that all of them should

relocate to the countryside. They settled near Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, where Dr Gray wrote another book, *Recognition* (Stroudsburg, 1969), encapsulating her beliefs and experiences in New Thought. She makes passing references to several Americans who investigated the transformative power of the Mind. They include Phineas Quimby (1802-66), a 'mental healer'; Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925), an associate of Mary Baker Eddy; and Charles Filmore (1854-1948), principal founder of the Unity School of Christianity. Crown Publishing now commissioned Dr Gray to write another book on the Tarot, for which Peter Gray Cohen again supplied most of the graphics. The new title was *A Complete Guide to the Tarot*, and it appeared in 1970. In the following year, the same publisher issued Eden Gray's third Tarot book, *Mastering the Tarot*. Her son provided new charts and drawings. The book's frontispiece is a photograph of the Hanged Man, rendered as a sculpture by the author herself.

Eden Gray's three Tarot books all feature the Waite/Smith Tarot and are in general agreement. However, the scope of her Tarotism grows from book to book with the successive addition of Cabalism, astrology and numerology. She explains the symbolism of the numeral cards by applying the Pythagorean decad to four realms: enterprise (Wands), emotions (Cups), force (Swords) and material gain (Pentacles). The astrology in the second and third books was provided by Gray's daughter-in-law, Mary Beckwith Cohen. Dr Gray did not herself profess a belief in astrology; but she allowed that the Tarot borrows astrological symbols, along with many others. All the Tarots by members of the Order of the Golden Dawn contain allusions to planets and zodiacal signs. Mary Cohen was certainly aware of the Order's doctrine, but deliberately deviated from it, as did Aleister Crowley and Paul Case, as shown below.

Trumps	Golden Dawn	Crowley	Case	Gray/Cohen
Fool	air	air	URANUS	nebulae
Magician	MERCURY	MERCURY	MERCURY	MERCURY
High Priestess	MOON	MOON	MOON	MOON
Empress	VENUS	VENUS	VENUS	VENUS
Emperor	Aries	Aquarius	Aries	JUPITER
Hierophant	Taurus	Taurus	Taurus	Taurus
Lovers	Gemini	Gemini	Gemini	Gemini
Chariot	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer
Strength	Leo	Leo	Leo	Leo
Hermit	Virgo	Virgo	Virgo	Virgo
Wheel	JUPITER	JUPITER	JUPITER	elements
Justice	Libra	Libra	Libra	Libra
Hanged Man	water	water	NEPTUNE	SUN
Death	Scorpio	Scorpio	Scorpio	SATURN
Temperance	Sagittarius	Sagittarius	Sagittarius	Sagittarius
Devil	Capricorn	Capricorn	Capricorn	Capricorn
Tower	MARS	MARS	MARS	MARS
Star	Aquarius	Aries	Aquarius	Aquarius
Moon	Pisces	Pisces	Pisces	Pisces
Sun	SUN	SUN	SUN	Aries
Judgement	fire	fire	PLUTO	Scorpio
World	SATURN	SATURN	SATURN	zodiac

In 1971 Dr Gray moved to Florida, but not into retirement. In 1980, she made a second trip around the world. In 1988 she accommodated Crown Publishing when asked to ‘update’ her first book. They re-issued *The Tarot Revealed* in 1988, now with a few new pages, which discuss ‘Tarot for the New Age’ and ‘Divination of Past lives’. The latter entertains the possibility of reincarnation, and offers a simple layout for disclosing some situation from the seeker's previous existence. Dr Gray suggests that such readings can prove applicable to current events, because the seeker may be pursuing a certain lesson, extending through consecutive lives, until it is properly learned.

Eden Gray remained active in artistic and religious circles. At her home in Vero Beach she kept a studio building where she painted with watercolours, oils and dyes. She experimented with marbling pigments on fabric, and she taught the craft to her grandson and his wife. The three wrote the first manual on the subject.¹⁵ Dr Gray offered Tarot readings in her home and at charity benefits. She was honoured at the International Tarot Society's symposium in 1997. In January 1999, in her ninety-seventh year, she suffered a mild heart attack. Although she was able to admit herself to the hospital, where doctors expected her to recuperate, she died there in her sleep.

Eden Gray's concepts of the Tarot

Eden Gray distinguished between divination and fortune-telling. The latter is, she says, no more than a casual and entertaining pastime. Authentic divination requires preliminary study, sustained practice and concentration on the process. She insisted that the cards are more than screens on which the reader projects personal interpretations. For Dr Gray, the process was more mysterious. Her experience was not that of wrenching meanings from random images. The selection and placement of cards seemed to her to be governed by their own intelligence. For example, in a series of related readings, some cards often reappear, as if defying chance and developing a theme. Dr Gray dismissed the use of 'psychic powers' and did not appreciate recent methods in which psychics glance abstractedly at a few cards and indulge in the free association of ideas. She recommended close attention to the content of each card. All her Tarot books have appendices in which the major symbols are defined: the reader is expected to adhere to the prescribed meanings. She resented the spate of new Tarots forsaking the cartomantic tradition.

We have noted Dr Gray's use of visualisation, which deliberately orchestrates mental images of the future. She supposed that the subconscious mind is poorly ordered and inclined to destructive behaviour. One must consciously choose one's ideals, then impress them on the subconscious. Visualisation confers more than happy moods; it harmonises the higher and lower functions of the mind, and impels the total self toward definite goals. By this means, one's goals are apt to be constructive and easily attainable – their realisation often seems almost miraculous. Perhaps this is because, according to New Thought, the best in each individual is the manifestation of God, who is all powerful. New Thought encourages self-improvement through introspection. Dr Gray urged that we attend to our divine nature and not accept flawed self-impressions, such as the opinions of detractors, false memories, the misperceptions gathered in childhood, or other confusion in the subconscious. Whenever one's self-regard is either contaminated or cleansed, practical effects will follow.

Eden Gray noticed the possibility of relating New Thought to her successful practice of cartomancy. Perhaps she was able to intuit the seeker's image of himself and thus predict events likely to proceed from that self-concept. At the same time, she recognised her great

responsibility. If the seeker is susceptible to suggestion, he may accept a cartomancer's prediction and subconsciously strive to cause its fulfilment. Dr Gray placed only the best construction on a layout of cards, and would refuse to give a reading for a person who was in a vulnerable state. Occultism should be rejected, she said, when it contradicts a belief in free will and personal creativity.

Dr Gray speculated that New Thought is compatible not only with divination, but with the very symbols in the Tarot. For her, the Magician symbolised human potential. The High Priestess was the subconscious, the veiled and fluid source of the imagination, waiting to be given clarity and direction. The Empress was the fruitfulness that springs from harmony in the soul. The Emperor was the power of reason, the conscious thinking that helps to govern creativity. The whole trump hierarchy, Dr Gray believed, symbolises 'the eternal religion that shows man as emanating from the Divine and points out the path he must ascend in order to realize the truth of his being – that he himself is Divine.'¹⁶

For young members of the counter-culture of the 1960s, Eden Gray was the standard authority on the Tarot. The great majority preferred her book to *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, which is both coy and condescending. She demonstrated divinatory layouts, including Waite's 'Celtic Cross' with her own variations, now widely adopted.¹⁷ There are Dutch translations of *The Tarot Revealed* and Spanish translations of *The Complete Guide to the Tarot*. The latter is available, in English, as an audio recording. These titles, along with *Mastering the Tarot*, have remained continuously in print and are still influential.

CHAPTER 21

New Focus on Old Visions

Eden Gray's Tarot books somewhat standardised the divinatory use of the pack. However, its deeper symbolism – whether Rosicrucian, Cabalistic, Hermetic, Neoplatonic or Wiccan – was still debated. In this regard, Tarotism continued to diversify. It often happened that some ancient or mediaeval concept, which had become a small part of XIX-century Tarotism, was extracted and developed by independent thinkers in the 1960s and 1970s.

The colour spectrum: Wirth, Maxwell and Marteau

[Chapter 11](#) features Oswald Wirth and *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge* (Paris, 1927); the book also briefly treats of colour relationships in the pack. A symmetrical diagram indicates their basic symbolism as Wirth imagined it.

RED = Spirit

YELLOW = Body

BLUE = Soul

GREEN = Bodily Soul

VIOLET = Spiritual Soul

ORANGE = Bodily Spirit

He also interprets gold as intellectual perfection, silver as moral perfection, white as purity and black as death, mystery, delusion and conspiracy. These meanings are derived from Western occultism, possibly reaching back to Chaldean astrology and Egyptian alchemy, both of which find an echo in Wirth's book. The general rationale involved the seven celestial deities. Blue is sometimes given to Mercury, the guide of departed souls (compare Wirth's 'Soul'), and purple to magisterial Jupiter, whom astrologers made the patron of Christianity (compare Wirth's 'Spiritual Soul'). Green was sacred to Venus, goddess of fertility. The remaining choices refer to the physical planet named for each deity – silvery Moon, golden Sun and reddish Mars; black belonged to Saturn, which occupies extreme darkness. Colour symbolism was important to magicians: they sought to entreat or summon the planetary gods or

intelligences by rituals that required the correct pigments for costumes, gems, etc. Wirth conscientiously obeyed his colour symbolism in his interpretation and design of the Tarot trumps, which he based on the Tarot de Marseille.

The Tarot de Marseille was the principal French standard pattern for the pack, used for game playing until superseded for that purpose by packs with French suit-signs. The pattern became a staple of occultism only through de Gébelin's suggestions, Lévi's elaborations and Papus' systematisations. When Wirth's first Tarot book appeared in 1927, French esoterists were conferring further respect on the Tarot de Marseille as the most authentic of the surviving patterns. This enthusiasm resonates in the influential occultist journal *Le Voile d'Isis*, which had been founded by Papus. In 1927 it included an article by a certain Darc, who, like Wirth, drew attention to the colour symbolism of the Tarot de Marseille.¹ Tarot cartomancy was also discussed by Tidianeuq (actually Adolphe-Louis Quénaidit, 1858-?), publishing in *Le Voile d'Isis* in 1928.²

The same issue contained an article by Joseph Maxwell, another devotee of the Tarot de Marseille.³ Maxwell (1858-1938) was of Scottish descent, but he was born in France. He studied law and became *avocat général* at Bordeaux. During his career, he attended medical classes, hoping that a knowledge of the nervous system would help him understand human behaviour in the broader contexts of criminality and spirituality. He investigated the activities of spiritualists, which led him to occultist interests, although he kept these private, not wishing to jeopardise his reputation or his public position: he became President of the Bordeaux Court of Appeal and Procureur Général. In 1919 he helped to found and guide a 'Metapsychic [sic] Institute'.⁴ Only late in his life did he write about the Tarot.⁵ Five years after his article in *Le Voile d'Isis*, he finished a book, *Le Tarot* (Paris, 1933).

Maxwell rejects the Cabala as pertaining to Tarot cards. He explains them in terms of astrology, according to his own system of correspondences,⁶ and explains the entire pack using numerology and colour symbolism.

WHITE = purity, absence of ego

YELLOW = spirit, animation, intelligence

BLUE = instinctive desire, will, yearning

RED = creative, generative, formative energy

GREEN = life, life force

BLACK = the vanities of the world of appearances, the illusion of material phenomena

He ignores the sumptuous Tarot by Wirth, and omits the golden motifs that Wirth saw as symbols of intellect. Maxwell substitutes yellow for intellect, thus disrupting Wirth's colour chart. Nevertheless, the two men generally agree when explaining individual cards. Maxwell refers to the 'Ancien Tarot de Marseille', which had been issued recently by Grimaud, a manufacturer in Paris.

The head of the Grimaud company was Paul Marteau (1885-1966).⁷ He became interested in parapsychology and esoteric traditions, and wrote on these subjects in 1921.⁸ He believed in the existence of elemental spirits, and accepted the authenticity of the famous photographs of fairies endorsed by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.⁹ Marteau impelled his company to publish an 'Astrological Tarot', conceived by George Muchery and rendered by Henri Armengol, in 1927. (This pack is not a true Tarot, but consists of 48 images denoting decans, planets and other astrological powers.)¹⁰

Marteau wrote *Le Tarot de Marseille* (Paris, 1949); Jean Paulhan wrote the Preface.¹¹ Marteau dedicates the book to the memory of Eugène Caslant (1865-1940), who prepared the 'statement' on pages xiii-xviii.¹² (Caslant mentions in this statement that the Greeks could have carried the original Tarot from Egypt to ancient Marseilles. In fact, the Tarot de Marseille is associated with that city only because the pack has been manufactured there in relatively modern times.¹³) Marteau himself makes no mention of the Tarot's origin or transmission. He does not claim to convey any grand tradition of interpretation, and does not use Cabalistic attributions or astrological correspondences. He gives divinatory meanings to all the *lames*, emphasising the colour symbolism that became prominent in the 1920s through the writings of Wirth, Maxwell and others. Marteau's illustrations – 78 cards separately pasted into his book – are reprints of Nicholas Conver's Tarot de Marseille (c. 1760). Its colouring occasionally differs from that of Grimaud's 'Ancien Tarot de Marseille'.

Marteau retired in 1963. In 1964 Grimaud issued the Tarot Arista. Its figure cards are again redrawn after the Tarot de Marseille.¹⁴ The numeral cards in the Tarot Arista are reworkings of Etteilla's: all the images have

backgrounds of a parchment colour, but they are framed in brighter colours. The trumps are individually distinguished by different hues, while four other colours are distinctive to each suit in its entirety. Detailed divinatory meanings are printed above and below the images, with 'upright' and 'reversed' sets of meanings. The margins contain titles and numbers. Paul Christian's names for the Arcana occur in the left margins or at the top. The suit cards, at the top, are numbered consecutively, with XXII on the Fool and LXXVIII on the 10 of Coins. This structure depends on Christian's elaborate 'rose' symbol with its 78 *loges*.¹⁵ New features appear in the cards' bottom margins: each trump bears the name of a zodiacal sign, preceded by its astrological ruler, i.e. a planet (Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are included); and each suit card is named for a day of the week.

In 1966, the year of Marteau's death, Grimaud issued the Grand Tarot Belline, another divinatory pack based on the Tarot de Marseille. Reportedly, the original was drawn by Edmond Billaudot (1829-81), and was found by the modern cartomancer Marcel Belline, who conveyed it to Grimaud.¹⁶ Edmond's designs and their titles descend from Paul Christian's Arcana, but Edmond's astrological inscriptions are those endorsed by 'Fomalhaut.'¹⁷

More cartomancers and occultists, in France and beyond, came to esteem the Tarot de Marseille because of Marteau's efforts. Leslie MacWeeney copied its trumps and Fool as illustrations for Arland Ussher's small book, *The XXII Keys of the Tarot* (Dublin, 1957).¹⁸ Ussher was an Irish philosopher with a special interest in symbolism. His Tarot book begins with a flawed history of the cards, but suggests a comprehensive knowledge of the Tarot in occultism. He follows Lévi's Cabalism in accommodating the trumps to the Hebrew alphabet, and inducts the Germanic runes, another alphabet with mystical connotations.¹⁹ Each trump inspires him to associate it with ancient mythologies and modern psychologies. The Empress is the *Magna Mater* and the 'Mother-imago' (a Freudian term); the Emperor is Zeus/Jehovah/Jupiter and the 'Father archetype' (a Jungian term). Ussher chooses to rely on the old Tarot packs, explicitly rejecting the Tarots by Pamela Colman Smith, Frieda Harris and Oswald Wirth. Grimaud's 'Ancien Tarot de Marseille' was redrawn for Hadès's *Manuel complete d'interprétation du Tarot* (Paris, 1968). The 'Ancient Tarot of Marseille' (Grimaud's English-language version)

appeared in *The Tarot* (New York and London, 1969) by Brad Steiger and Ron Warmoth. They recount Warmoth's Tarot readings for celebrities in the 1960s.

A mystic tower: Cartwright, Blakeley and Lammey

Sir Fairfax Leighton Cartwright was a diplomat whose service took him to Teheran, where he developed an interest in Persian culture. Supplementing his income by writing, he published several verse plays, a three-volume novel and an allegory *The Mystic Rose from the Garden of the King: a fragment of the vision of Sheikh Haji Ibrahim of Kerbela* (London, 1899). *The Mystic Rose* contains moral reflections and moral tales, followed by imaginary spiritual instruction given to a young king. The first book is devoted to the things of this world, the second to spiritual things. In the second Book, on pp. 199-229, a 'Mystic Dervish' describes to the King the revelation he has experienced of the Temple of Human Knowledge, a temple built like a tower. The dervish ascends the tower, on each level of which are three chambers, with the last (the 22nd) at the very top. In each chamber the dervish has a vision. The sequence of visions corresponds unmistakably, though in some cases very loosely, with the sequence of the Tarot trumps, taken in Papus's order. No mention is made of the Tarot, and a reader unacquainted with it would have no idea that there was any external reference. The Hanged Man is said to have rebelled against Revealed Law. The dervish's mentor explains that the first eighteen visions show the Breath of Unity descending towards the Abyss of Darkness: the last four represent the yearning for Reunion raising the Spirit of the Eternal back to the Unity from which it had proceeded.

Cartwright's allegory was largely ignored until used by another Englishman, John D. Blakeley, who wrote *The Mystical Tower of the Tarot* (London, 1974). Blakeley was a chemical engineer and a member of the Dormer Masonic Study Circle, in which he served as secretary and vice president. His special interests were in Eastern religions and ancient mystery traditions. When he retired from his job in the chemical industry and became a private consultant, he found time to write about the Tarot. His book contains disconnected information about various religions, beneath which can be found a central thread that is clear, if tenuous. He is aware of certain ties between Orphism and Neoplatonism, and between Neoplatonism and Sufism. He wishes to link Sufism to the Tarot, and he

finds support in *The Sufis* (New York, 1964), a book by Idries Shah (1924-96). It has an appendix on the Tarot, 'an allegory of the teachings of a Sufi master about certain cosmic influences upon humanity'. The Tarot in the West has been influenced by Cabalism, incompatible with the original cards. Some trumps, says Shah, have been transposed, and some altered (notably trumps 14, 15, 16 and 20). He does not identify the 'Sufi master' or the exact distortions alleged for the trumps. Blakeley, thrown back on his own resources, encountered the allegory by Sir F.L. Cartwright, and regarded it, not as a fantasy of Cartwright's, but as an authentic 'Sufi document'. With the general permission granted by Shah, Blakeley rearranges trumps; but he also gives a peculiar presentation of the levels in Cartwright's tower.

I	THE HIEROPHANT	III	THE MAGUS	II	THE HIGH PRIESTESS
IV	THE EMPEROR	VI	THE LOVER	V	THE EMPRESS
VII	THE CHARIOT	IX	THE HERMIT	VIII	STRENGTH
X	THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE	XII	THE HANGED MAN	XI	JUSTICE
XIII	DEATH	XV	THE DEVIL	XIV	TEMPERANCE
XVI	THE THUNDERBOLT	XVIII	THE MOON	XVII	THE STAR
XIX	THE SUN	XXI	THE FOOL	XX	JUDGEMENT
		XXII	THE WORLD		

The columns on the left and right are to be considered in pairs: they represent, from top to bottom, the soul's descent into matter. Each of these fourteen images equates to classical deities, also regarded as couples: trumps I and II become Saturn and Rhea, IV and V Jupiter and Juno, and so on. Blakeley's central column of trumps, read from bottom to top, represents the soul's ascent to the Divine. In fact, the Sufis did inherit ideas about spiritual hierarchies and mystical ascents, probably reinforced by ancient Neoplatonism, but a Muslim mystic surely would not give such attention to pagan deities. Blakeley is also unfaithful to Cartwright's allegory: the two authors differ in the division and disposition of trumps along the descending and rising paths. In any case, Cartwright has not preserved an authentic 'Sufi document'. No one has given real documentary evidence linking Sufism to the Tarot.

William C. Lammey first became a civil engineer with the US Navy, and then an architect. He felt spiritually connected to the Persian mystic Jami (1414-92). Interested in symbols and languages, Lammey studied the Tarot and the chants of Sufis. He wrote *Karmic Tarot*, which was published in

1988. He generally follows Cartwright, whom he credits, and also cites Blakeley, but fails to note any discrepancies between the two. Arranging the trumps to symbolise seven stages leading to enlightenment, Lammey finds parallels in a variety of other septenaries, such as the spectrum of colours, the sequence of chakras and the ages of life.

Hekate's globes: Mme Blavatsky, Annie Besant and Mayananda

The third volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (London, 1893), edited by Annie Besant using notes left by Mme Blavatsky, refers to the modern Tarot as a debased version.²⁰ 'The real Tarot, in its complete symbology, can be found in the Babylonian cylinders ... antediluvian rhombs.'²¹ They are also characterised as the 'rotating globes of Hekate'.²² These allusions are to the mysterious *inyx*, a kind of bullroarer or top, which the Chaldeans used in worship and ritual magic.²³ Nothing unique to Chaldea actually evolved into Tarot cards, but the suggestion appealed irresistibly to a few occultists.

Mayananda wrote *The Tarot for Today* in 1963.²⁴ He uses AE. Thierens's *Elements of Esoteric Astrology* (Philadelphia, 1931), but ignores *The General Book of the Tarot* (Philadelphia, 1930) by the same author, who gives the trumps a distinctive set of astrological correspondences.²⁵ Mayananda prefers those given by Crowley, whom he also follows in transposing the trumps of Emperor and Star, although he unaccountably doubts the Cabalism on which Crowley's correspondences ultimately depend. Mayananda supposes the cards to have predated the Cabala and the Hebrew language itself. However, he does believe that a 'Chaldean' Tarot was transmitted to Europe through the Cabalists and that they were as loyal to the original as their faith permitted.

Mayananda disregards the history and archaeology of Babylonia and Chaldea, and turns to Theosophy, citing Papus, Ouspensky and the Curtisses, all of whom were initially interested in Theosophy. We again learn that the cards symbolise sequences of spiritual Evolution and Involution. Mayananda also tries to apply the Theosophical principle of 'Seven Rays', but fails to elucidate this key concept. For a sample, we can consult one of his sources, *The Seven Rays* (Wheaton, Illinois, and London, 1925) by Ernest Wood (1883-1965). He in turn derived his ideas from Mme Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. All consciousness is said to

emanate from the mind of God. In humans, it differentiates into seven channels. Mayananda tries to link each one with a triad of Tarot trumps.

Wood's Rays	Mayananda's Triads
1 will, seeking freedom	I, VIII, XV
2 love, seeking unity	II, IX, XVI
3 thought, seeking comprehension	III, X, XVII
4 imagination, seeking harmony	IV, XI, XVIII
5 thought, seeking truth	V, XII, XIX
6 love, seeking God	VI, XIII, XX
7 will, seeking beauty	VII, XIV, XXI

The seven triads constitute Mayananda's 'Horus Arrangement'. (Horus's name has its own context in Theosophy. Ernest Wood, following Mme Blavatsky, refers to the Egyptian god as a symbol for the union of mind and matter: as Horus springs from Osiris, the earthly man emanates from the Heavenly Man – or Spirit, *Purusha*.) Wood gives the 'Birth of Horus' as a 'characteristic' of the Fourth Ray.²⁶ For Mayananda, this ray and the fourth triad are literally central to his Horus Arrangement. Unfortunately, neither Horus's birth nor a ray 'seeking harmony' really provides a theme uniting the triad of Star, Fortitude and Moon. The other six rays are likely to be equally unsuited to their triads, but Mayananda shows no hint of disillusionment. His motto is 'Try', an injunction that the Theosophists had taken from P.B. Randolph.

Mayananda wraps his Horus Arrangement into a circle. This, he says, reconstructs the rotating globes of Hekate. The trumps revolve around the Fool card, thus solving the nagging problem of where to place it.

Mayananda also presents the trumps in other schemas quite different from the Horus Arrangement. At the back of his book he shows the trumps. The Fool is labelled 0, but is placed after the World. The featured pack is the Tarot de Marseille, but with the numbers on trumps IV and XVII counterchanged as Crowley recommended. The old Wheel of Fortune is inexplicably replaced by a poorly drawn copy of Arcanum X by Oswald Wirth.

Pre-Christian talismans: witches, Leland and Huson

Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903) was an American folklorist fascinated by Gypsy culture and by the origin and practice of witchcraft.

He was confident that the lower classes, including peasants and witches, preserved fragments of pagan worship. He may have been the first author to refer to witchcraft as 'the old religion'. He mentions the invoking of Jano (presumably the ancient Janus), which requires that two Tarot cards, the Wheel of Fortune and the Devil, be applied to a bedstead, while a rhyme commands 'the Devil who is chief of all devils' to appear.²⁷

According to Leland, a Tuscan witch called Maddalena provided him with written stories and spells current among her sisterhood. He quotes her transcripts as part of his book *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches* (London, 1899). (Aradia is said to have been the goddess of witches.) In one of Maddalena's spells, the goddess Laverna is coerced by an incantation accompanied by the spreading of 40 cards, symbolic of 'superior gods (*dei superi*)'.²⁸ Could these cards have been the 40 trumps found in the Minchiate (the Florentine Tarot)? Paul Huson believes so.

Paul Anthony Huson was born in London on 19 September 1942. His parents were Edward Richard Huson, an author, and his wife Olga (née Lehmann), an art director for films. In 1964 Huson received a diploma of art from the Slade, and then took graduate courses in cinema arts. After designing for drama, television and film, he settled in California in 1968. He hoped to become an art director in Hollywood movies, but his employment was blocked by his non-union status. He later achieved great success in television production. In the interim, he wrote books and illustrated them himself. His first was *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks and Covens* (New York, 1970), followed by *The Devil's Picturebook: The Compleat Guide to Tarot Cards* (New York, 1971).

Huson endorses Leland's evidence for the talismanic use of cards. Having consulted the standard literature on card history, Huson knew that Tarots were once called *triumphi*. He suggests that the cards might preserve the mysteries of the god Dionysus: the word 'triumph' derives from the Greek 'thriambos', meaning a processional hymn in honour of that god. Huson does not explain how this theme endured into the Renaissance and surfaced as a pack of cards. When he discusses specific trumps, he does not deal with a unifying myth or cultus, but with a wide range of pagan themes. This frequently extends beyond anything that could have been known to peasants, even in the wildest imaginings of C.G. Leland.

Leland does not describe the size, shape, fabric or imagery of the witches' cards. He seems not to have procured examples or to have made copies. The 40 cards were doubtless unimpressive, probably being those of a standard (shortened) Italian pack, not the intriguing trumps of the Minchiate. Leland does not say how the cards were acquired, stored or prepared for use by the witches. He does not say who was empowered to use the cards, on what basis they were supposed to work, or whether he learned the technique. In short, he does not behave as though he encountered real evidence. More probably, he or his informants merely elaborated on false impressions from occultist myths.²⁹ There is no convincing proof that Tarotism, in Leland's time, extended to anyone in Italy, let alone witches and Gypsies there.³⁰ Modern scholarship dismisses Leland's theory that witchcraft could be the underground survival of pagan religions.³¹

A reversed Tree: Stirling, Grant and Falorio

William Stirling (1861-1902) lectured on architecture at University College, London, and was a friend of the writer Robert Cunningham Graham and the artist William Rothenstein, through whom he met W.B. Yeats. Stirling is not thought to have been a Freemason and did not belong to the Theosophical Society, the Golden Dawn or any other known esoteric fraternity. In 1897 he published anonymously *The Canon: an Exposition of the Pagan Mystery Perpetuated in the Cabala as the Rule of all the Arts* (reprinted London 1974 and 1981, New York 1999).³² This deeply eccentric work attempted to recover the canon of proportion which Stirling believed to have governed the design and construction of all ancient sacred buildings, and of literary works as well: the proportions had been intended to correspond to those between divine realities.³³ As the subtitle indicates, the book contains a great deal about the Cabala; it also refers to the early Church Fathers and to Neoplatonic writings, and makes copious use of *gematria* (numerological interpretations of words).

The Canon - in its last chapter, XIII 'Rhetoric' - makes explicit reference to the Tarot. 'In the twenty-two trump cards,' Stirling assures us, 'we possess a series of hieroglyphs corresponding to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet' (p. 374). After mentioning their possible Egyptian origin, he asserts that they were connected to the Hebrew letters in the XV

century; they represent, he explains, ‘an authentic and fundamental version of the ideas ... associated with the primitive alphabet’ perhaps devised by the Phoenicians. As Stirling apparently lacked the secret teachings of British Tarotists, he relied on their French precursors. On p. 380 a table shows that he accepted the attribution of letters to trumps favoured by Lévi and Papus, with *Aleph* assigned to the Juggler (trump I), *Shin* to the Mate (i.e. *Matto* or Fool) and *Tau* to the World. Stirling claims that the attribution of Hebrew letters to the trumps yields a ‘sequence of hieroglyphs’ that follow the ‘course of the soul’ (p. 375).³⁴ He charts the soul's path along a double Tree of Life: nine *sephiroth* stand above the position of Malkuth, as usual, but nine others depend from Malkuth in a second Tree whose structure is an inversion of the first. These nineteen *sephiroth*, as successive steps, would seem to offer only a descent from the familiar *Kether*; but this is not so, because Stirling's explanation shifts between a mystical paradigm and a cosmological chart. He imagines the soul descending to the tenth position, which corresponds to the soul's earthly experiences; but it must progress still further. This second phase advances ‘above’ or ‘below’ our planet, according to one's point of view. Stirling refers to Dante's trilogy in which the poet goes downward (inward) through the globe, climbs the Mountain of Purgatory, and goes upward (outward) through the celestial spheres to Heaven.

Stirling follows Lévi in interpreting the *sephiroth* in terms of Pythagorean number symbolism. The decad suggests a descent, as the number sequence proceeds ever further from the ideal of Unity. The Tarot's Wheel of Fortune symbolises the Ten, but also the earth at the centre of the cosmos, according to Stirling. By his reckoning, Fortitude and the Hanged Man correspond to the two equinoxes. Stirling neglects specific interpretations of the remaining trumps, but they clearly chart a further descent reaching Hades, symbolised by the Devil, and a subsequent ascent reaching infinity, symbolised by the World.

Stirling's book did not impress his contemporaries, although W.W. Westcott respectfully discussed it in the *Theosophical Review*.³⁵ Crowley was one of the few who studied *The Canon*; he recommended it as ‘The best text-book of Applied Qabalah’.³⁶ After Crowley's death, his youngest disciple, Kenneth Grant, preserved traces of Stirling's paradigm.³⁷ Grant seems deliberately to follow Stirling's ambiguity when describing spatial relations among the *sephiroth*: Grant's Tree is the ‘left hand’ or the

‘nightside’ of the usual Tree, sometimes termed ‘infernal’ (beneath it) and sometimes ‘averse’ (behind). But Grant's Tree, although viewed as the Tree of Death instead of the Tree of Life, is otherwise the Tree that Crowley approved: the trumps do not correspond to the *sephiroth*, but to the pathways between them.

Crowley's *Liber CCXXXII, Liber Arcanorum* (Book 231, *Book of Secrets*) was an important source for Grant's alternative Tree.³⁸ Crowley shows 22 sigils for ‘the houses of Mercury [Thoth] and their genii’ and 22 sigils for ‘the cells of the *qliphoth* and their genii’. It will be recalled that the *qliphoth* are the shadowy remnants of that cosmos which existed prior to the present one and which still exists outside it, according to Cabalists. Both sets of sigils correspond to the Hebrew letters, and therefore can be arranged on the pathways of two distinct Trees, one for the ‘lights’ and one for the ‘shadows’. The Tarot trumps are involved in the design of the sigils and in 22 verses of scripture by Crowley. He then lists the shadow-demons by their names, each commencing with the associated letter (Amprodias for *Aleph*, Baratchial for *Beth*, and so on through the alphabet).³⁹ Grant gave special significance to the sphere of Daath as the gateway through which adepts can enter the infernal pathways. He came to see these as ‘tunnels’, belonging to Set, i.e. the Egyptian god of darkness and chaos.

From 1955 to 1962 Grant ran the New Isis lodge for practical occultists. He regarded himself as the head of the O.T.O. and taught Crowley's sex magic. Grant and his lodge worked to unite the occult influences of the earth (Isis) with those of the heavens (Nu). The union was to prepare the way for unearthly intelligences to enter our sphere and inaugurate a new age. These beings have much in common with the superhuman ‘Old Ones’, described by H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937), an American writer of horror stories. Lovecraft's Old Ones are usually summoned by ritual; he alludes to the *Necronomicon*, an imaginary grimoire which some of his readers have taken to be objectively real.⁴⁰ Others have pretended to produce the *Necronomicon* – according to their own powers of imagination.⁴¹ Lovecraft largely belongs to the tradition of Bulwer-Lytton, whose ‘dweller of the threshold’ arises again in the title of *The Lurker at the Threshold* (Sauk City, Wisconsin, 1945), a book begun by Lovecraft and completed by his friend August Derleth (1907-71). Lovecraft further suggested that the Old Ones can be contacted by some special technology. They seem to become denizens of outer space or of alternative universes.

Kenneth Grant's occultism therefore becomes an ambitious synthesis of Cabalism, visionary states, UFOs, interplanetary visitors, sex magic and a new aeon.⁴² Especially prominent is his integration of all demonologies, whether Taoist, Gnostic, Hindu or Voodoo, to produce a theory that he calls 'Typhonian', in honour of that Typhon whom he regards as the mother of Set. One of her manifestations was as Tauret, the hippopotamus goddess, whose name he finds modified as 'Tarot': she personifies cyclical time, while the cards symbolise 'Mysteries of Celestial Revolutions, Discs [*Sephiroth*] and stellar influences'.⁴³ The New Isis lodge studied the Tarot, but does not seem to have produced an 'official' pack.

In the early 1970s American admirers of Grant's magic began to consult him about visions of other worlds and alien creatures.⁴⁴ Grant was alert to the similarities to be found in the annals of New Isis, and was gratified that independent witnesses had succeeded in following the Typhonian current. In 1974, he published *Nightside of Eden* (London), in which he expands further on Crowley's *Liber CCXXXII* by furnishing the Tree of Death with correspondences comparable to the Golden Dawn's correspondences for the Tree of Life. *Nightside of Eden* thus provided a clear set of instructions by which a new Tarot could be constructed. This task was undertaken by Linda Falorio.

Linda Falorio graduated, with distinction, from a Pennsylvania high school and from the University of Pittsburgh, where she received a B.A. degree in Psychology and Fine Art. In 1973 she completed a doctoral programme in clinical psychology at the University of Miami. She became a school psychologist, a supervisor of graduate students in rehabilitation counselling, a community consultant in mental health and a therapist in private practice. She encourages her clients in self-awareness through hypnosis, astrology and the Tarot. She has also studied yoga and Cabala.⁴⁵ From 1983 to 1988 Ms Falorio, assisted by her partner Fred Fowler, engaged in many magical rites to explore the tunnels of Set. She was moved to paint vibrant Tarot trumps, named for the *qliphoth*-genii and designed around their sigils, thus producing 'The Shadow Tarot'. In 1989, she founded headLess Press, which published her Tarot and an explanatory chapbook.⁴⁶ Both are now available without charge on the Internet. She is now a Typhonian priestess, painter and performance artist.

Charts of the Psyche: Gresham, Cooke and Metzner

Charles Williams (1886-1945) was an English author of poetry, fiction and commentaries on the occult. In his novel *The Greater Trumps* (London, 1932), the Tarot casts magical spells, producing fire, snow, wind and earth.

The novel's 1950 edition appeared with a preface by William Lindsay Gresham (1909-62). He was an American editor and author, best known for his novel *Nightmare Alley* (New York, 1946), which has 22 chapters named for the Tarot trumps. He and his wife, the poet and novelist Joy Davidman, contributed to a religious anthology, *These Found the Way* (David Wesley Soper, Philadelphia, ed. 1951). Gresham was successively a deist, a Unitarian, an atheist, a Presbyterian and an Emersonian transcendentalist.

Although more recent authors have suggested that the trumps constitute some sort of 'memory system', Gresham had already discounted the possibility, for, he said, there may be nothing to memorise.⁴⁷

The Tarot is not a mnemonic device for a set doctrine, it would seem, but a philosophical slide-rule on which the individual can work his own metaphysical and religious equations. There is no single trump which represents Man. The Tarotist himself is Man and since the symbols point to relationships between God, Man and the Universe, the student at once becomes part of the Dance.

Gresham traces the three parts of the 'equation' to the Neoplatonism of Plotinus. The divisions of his doctrine are: (1) the primeval Being, the One, absolute causality; (2) the ideal world and the soul; and (3) the phenomenal world. The second level, Gresham says, gives a clue to the 22 leaves of the Major Arcana. He is certain that 'the mood of the Tarot' is Neoplatonic. In a modern context, he sees the Tarot as bristling with Jungian archetypes. Both Neoplatonism and Jungianism are influential among American Tarotists.

John Cooke was born in Honolulu in 1920.⁴⁸ As a young man he pursued acting and dancing, but when he contracted polio he began spiritual inquiries that led to an examination of the Tarot; he read Williams's *The Greater Trumps*.⁴⁹ In the 1960s Cooke was married and living in Carmel, California, where he guided friends in an informal study of mysticism and the paranormal. In 1962 he and four others began to employ a Ouija board. They purportedly interrogated an entity identified only as 'the Nameless One' or merely 'One'. Over several months, the interrogators received detailed instructions for rendering a modern Tarot. Cooke accordingly painted the 'Book of T'. It replaces the 'Books of Life': 'ascribed to

Thoth-Tehuti, the scribe of the gods and one of the oldest of the gods who, by tradition, came from Atlan – or Atlantis, the land of Atlan. Thoth may have been an historical personage. It is believed that he established a colony in Egypt before Atlantis went down.’⁵⁰ In 1968 Cooke's designs were published first as posters, one for each of the 22 ‘Major Trumps’, and then as cards in a limited edition with a booklet, *T – The New Tarot: The Tarot for the Aquarian Age* (Kentfield, California), written by John Starr Cooke and Rosalind Sharpe. The booklet shows two sets of Arcana: Cooke has rendered the new Arcana for the ‘Book of T’ in an expressionistic style, perhaps reflecting something of the psychedelic imagery then fashionable; Rosalind Sharpe has reworked Oswald Wirth's first trumps, although having names in English and lacking numbers and Hebrew letters. The new trumps by Cooke also lack numbers, but bear names lettered in lower compartments. The order and content are novel.

Nameless-One	replaces	the Fool	Actor	replaces	Emperor
Hanging Man	replaces	the Hanged Man	Feeler	replaces	Empress
Mother	replaces	the High Priestess	Royal Maze	replaces	The Wheel
Virgin	replaces	the World	Deliverer	replaces	Strength
Unity	replaces	the Lovers	Changer	replaces	Juggler
Victorious-One	replaces	the Chariot	Renewer	replaces	Death
Way-Shower	replaces	the Star	Reacter	replaces	Moon
Doer	replaces	the Sun	Donor	replaces	Justice
Thinker	replaces	the Devil	Speaker	replaces	High Priest
Citadel	replaces	the Tower	Reverser	replaces	Temperance
Seeker	replaces	the Hermit	Knower	replaces	Judgement

In 1969 and 1970, the Cooke/Sharpe pack and its booklet were issued as a commercial venture. Packaged with them was a folded poster of the ‘Royal Maze’, an enlargement of the trump that replaces the Wheel of Fortune, here serving as a format for spreading the cards. Also included were two additional booklets, *G – the Royal Maze: Guide to the Game of Destiny* and *I – Instructions: A Synopsis of the Book of G*.

As interpreted in *G – the Royal Maze*, the courts and numeral cards have many associations, including astrological ones. The four suit-signs, which are of a novel assortment, coordinate with several quaternities.

Suits	Elements	Functions	Senses	Direction	Quality	Races
Blades	Air	Thinking	Sight	North	Cold	White
Serpents	Fire	Feeling	Hearing	South	Hot	Black
Pears	Water	Intuition	Smell	East	Wet	Yellow
Stones	Earth	Sensation	Touch	West	Dry	Red

The ‘functions’ derive from the ‘personality types’ hypothesised by the psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961). He categorised individuals according to the predominant mode by which they preferred to acquire knowledge. Further Jungianism affects the court cards (presented in this order in *G – the Royal Maze*):

Queen = the anima (the feminine self),
King = consciousness,
Page = the eternal child (the future self)
Knight = psychic breakthrough.

In 1975 Rosalind Sharpe published *The Word of One: The Aquarian Tarot Revelation* (Lakemont, Georgia), a transcript of the Ouija board's dictation, amounting to 414 pages. John Starr Cooke died in 1976. His sister, Alice Cooke Kent, published *Community – A Game* in 1979. This consisted of three sets of trumps conceived by Cooke: the ‘Book of T’, the ‘Atlantean Tarot’, also drawn by Cooke, and ‘Medieval Gypsy’, drawn by Rosalind Sharpe. All three sets were in black and white.

Rosalind Sharpe studied history at Sonoma State University, where in 1984 she finished her Master's thesis about the history of Big Sur, California. She later wrote books on the pioneer settlers of Big Sur.

Alice Cooke Kent reissued her brother's three Tarots, giving colour to ‘Medieval Gypsy’ and improving the colour reproduction of the original Cooke/Sharpe Tarot, complete with the suit cards. These new issues were packaged together as *The Word of One Tarot* (Visalia, California, 1992). The primary purpose for all Cooke's cards was not divination, but meditation leading to the ‘deeper layers’ of consciousness.

This possibility – the expansion of consciousness through the Tarot – attracted Ralph Metzner. He was born in Berlin on 18 May 1936 and earned a Bachelor's degree at Oxford in 1958. Then, moving to the US, he enrolled at Harvard. In March 1961 he encountered psychedelic drugs, following the lead of Harvard professor Timothy Leary (1920-96), who promoted hallucinogens for the expansion of consciousness. In 1962 Metzner received a doctoral degree in psychology. He wrote *The Psychedelic Experience* (New York, 1964) in collaboration with Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert (b. 1931), who later styled himself Baba Ram Dass.^{[51](#)} From 1965 to 1967, Metzner was editor and publisher of *Psychedelic Review*.

In 1967 Metzner settled in California. He investigated Gurdjieffian self-observation, Reichian bioenergetics, Gestalt therapy, encounter groups and psychodrama. He met John Cooke and Rosalind Sharpe, and wrote a short Introduction to their booklet, *T - The New Tarot: The Tarot for the Aquarian Age*. In 1968 Metzner became an American citizen. In the same year, he met Carol Ann and Paul Russell Schofield, who had founded the School of Actualism. This is an adaptation of *Agni Yoga*, a form of meditation that allows for the personal discovery of the Actual Self as a manifestation of the Divine Being. Metzner studied Actualism and became a teacher of it. Remarkably productive in 1968 and 1969, he was staff psychologist with the Kaiser Permanente Medical Group, co-director of the Institute of Group and Family Studies, instructor at Stanford University, editor of *The Ecstatic Adventure* (New York, 1968) and a psychotherapist in private practice in Palo Alto, California. He treated of both Actualism and the Tarot in his *Maps of Consciousness*, which was published in 1971.⁵² It became ‘the mantic bible of the 1970s’.⁵³

We have seen that Paul Case, William Gresham and John Cooke casually noted Jungian archetypes in the Tarot. Yet Metzner may well be the first accredited psychologist to have integrated the Tarot with XX-century theories of the psyche and to have published on such a combination of ideas. Metzner claims that the Tarot expresses ‘the archetypes of psychic transformation in direct, visual form ... without the intermediary of language or code’. He summarises the popular Tarot myths and discusses the Cabalistic Tree of Life. His illustrations include a selection of trumps from the Waite/Smith Tarot, the BOTA Tarot and ‘The Tarot for the Aquarian Age’ by Cooke. Metzner discusses many of the Major Arcana and relates some of the ‘Aquarian’ trumps to Actualism: the Victorious-One is the Actual Self; the Deliverer, which features flames, symbolises one's inner fire, as taught in *Agni Yoga* (literally ‘union by fire’). Metzner, like Gresham, refuses to force the Tarot into conformity with detailed dogma. This breaks with earlier Tarotism and heralds the open-ended interpretations that are permitted for the trumps today.

The alphabet of the angels: Dee, Crowley and Kay

In the 1960s the Crowley/Harris Tarot enjoyed a renaissance. Those unaware of the underlying Cabalism soon had convenient sources to add to the revelations of Crowley, Regardie and Frieda Harris.⁵⁴ Early in the

decade, the Simpson Printing Company of Dallas used the illustrations from Crowley's *The Book of Thoth* to reissue the Thoth Tarot in an edition of about 250 packs, printed in blue on the faces and in red on the backs.⁵⁵ The Golden Dawn's correspondences for the trumps were given in Richard Cavendish's book, *The Black Arts* (New York, 1967).⁵⁶ Shambala Publications reportedly issued another version of the Crowley/Harris Tarot, printed in green, in 1968.⁵⁷

In the same year, another 'Book of Thoth', consisting of the Fool and 21 trumps, was completed by Jeremy Kay, an artist who had studied Crowley's texts.⁵⁸ Kay's cards are in his own imagery and style, although based on Crowley's ideas.⁵⁹ Some cards here are influenced by Frieda Harris, but some by Jessie Burns Parke and by Oswald Wirth. Kay's pack, in black and white, was originally intended for students to complete using their own pigments. Another printing provided colour. The Golden Dawn's name for each card is centred in a lower margin. To the left is a Hebrew letter.⁶⁰ At the upper left the letter's arithmetical value is given as an Arabic numeral, while at the margin's centre a Roman numeral tells the card's place in the trump order (zero marks the Fool), and a sigil for the astrological correspondence stands at the far right. At the lower right is a letter from 'the alphabet of the angels'.

It will be recalled that Aleister Crowley closely studied the angelology of the Elizabethan magus John Dee. Dee recorded that spirits communicated an 'angelic' or 'Enochian' alphabet to him and his scribe, Edward Kelly.⁶¹ Kelly magically converted the letters to their phonetic values. On this basis, Jeremy Kay coordinated the letters with the Hebrew letters that Crowley attributed to the Tarot trumps.⁶² There are 21 Enochian letters, and Kay gives one of them to the Fool; the artist provides a special glyph – a star or disc with eleven rays – which he places at the lower right corner of the eleventh trump, Strength.

Grady Louis McMurtry (1918-85), became Crowley's disciple as an American soldier in Europe during the Second World War and had admired Frieda Harris's Tarot paintings.⁶³ In the 1960s McMurtry wished to see the pack newly published in full colour. As the head of the O.T.O., he supervised the reissue of both *The Book of Thoth* (New York, 1969) and the Crowley/Harris Tarot itself.⁶⁴ The pack was immediately imitated by a printer in Hong Kong and by another in upstate New York. More have

followed, with and without authorisation.⁶⁵ Thus the public became ever more aware of the Golden Dawn's interpretation of the Tarot.

The welter of competing ideas did not seem to trouble many Tarotists. They merely assimilated whatever was to their taste. Outside the Tarotist schools, a unified doctrine for the cards became less and less likely.

In our view, no Tarotist has correctly explained the origin of the trumps, their peculiar assortment of subjects or their order as found in any traditional pattern. We hope for a theory in which the programme of symbolism is both internally coherent and historically plausible.

Afterword

We originally intended to extend our history of Tarotism down to the present day. For reasons of space, we have taken it no further than 1970, when Crowley's exposition of the 'secret doctrine' entered a truly global domain. We have sometimes reported events later than that date in order to round off a story that began before it, but we have not told any stories that began after it. Since 1970, the occult and divinatory Tarot has spread over almost the entire world, or at least the Western world.

With this book and *A Wicked Pack of Cards*, written with Thierry Depaulis, we have recounted the history of the occult Tarot for its first 190 years. We do not intend to write a book covering the last 30 years. Such a book would have to record a great deal of detail. Many new Tarots were made and discussed. There must have been sixty times as many different Tarot packs, not intended for play, produced in the three decades since 1970 as in the eighteen decades before it, since the publication by Etteilla of the very first esoteric Tarot pack. In the US, the enthusiasm for the Tarot was adroitly recognised by US Games Systems, Inc. In 1970 its president Stuart Kaplan published *Tarot Cards for Fun and Fortune-Telling*. At the same time his firm marketed the Swiss XIX-century version of the Tarot de Besançon, to whose distribution in the US he had obtained exclusive rights; this is an Italian-suited Tarot still used for play in Switzerland, with Jupiter and Juno replacing the Pope and Popess. Since then US Games Systems has obtained exclusive publication rights for many packs, and has dominated the sale of Tarots in the USA. Meanwhile, Kaplan has become a prolific author on the subject; the three volumes of his *Encyclopedia of Tarot* illustrate not only historical Tarots but a great

number of esoteric ones as well. Europe and Japan now witness their own proliferation of new packs in the esoteric tradition.

A result of all this has been a change in the attitude of Tarotists. They were formerly content to own just one pack, choosing, from the very few types available, that which appeared the most 'authentic' or that which embodied the most convincing esoteric interpretation of the cards. But now an enthusiast may build up a whole collection of Tarot packs. And with this has come a change in the attitude of those who design new packs. Few are even aware of the exoteric Tarot, intended only for card play: they conceive 'the Tarot' only in some occultist form. But they do not strive to illustrate the most authentic or plausible esoterism. They have adapted the pack to many different modes extrinsic to it. They have devised versions to reflect a multitude of cultures – Celtic, Japanese, Native American, Basque and so forth – in which the Tarot never figured. They have appropriated it to illustrate the work of writers and artists such as Dante, Shakespeare and Blake, none of whom ever heard of the Tarot.

It is unsurprising that, especially in Italy, even a person who is uninterested in occultism and divination may seize upon the enterprise of designing his or her own Tarot, for it offers aesthetic or humorous potential: Tarot has become an art form, albeit a minor one. The trumps are sometimes forced to obey frivolous themes, such as shoes and tobacco products. In this, designers have been repeating what had already happened with French-suited Tarot packs intended for play. In packs of the latter kind, the trump cards did not need to conform to traditional design, since players now identified them solely by the large numerals printed on them. Hence their designers, in XIX-century Germany and in the Habsburg Empire, could illustrate them however they pleased. Most packs remained faithful to one or another conventional type of design; but others displayed buildings of a particular city, illustrated dramas or satirised politicians. In France, the exoteric Tarot suffered major change only in the XX century: the Italian suit-signs were converted to the common French ones, and the trumps began to vary in subject matter. In Italy, the birthplace of the Tarot, players of the game have never abandoned the traditional trump figures that come down from the original invention of the pack. By an irony of history, the games players have been far more faithful than the occultists in preserving the oldest symbols in the Tarot.

In most countries, esoteric Tarot packs are still used either for solemn occult purposes or for what most people associate with Tarot cards – fortune-telling. Tarotists of the vanished counter-culture once warned that the cards should not be used for financial gain;⁶⁶ now experts derive an income as Tarot consultants. In the US, television commercials give telephone numbers by which Tarot readers can be consulted at any hour – of course, the small grey letters at the bottom of the TV screen say, ‘For entertainment purposes only’. But the Tarot business has its serious aspects too. Tarot readers can achieve a much higher social status than those who offer their services on the streets of cities in other countries. Although the Tarot is not yet a standard subject that can be studied for credit at universities, it has become highly professionalised in America. Tarot conferences are held. Institutions ‘teach Tarot’: the symbolic significance of the pack, the meanings of the individual cards and the theory of laying them out. Tarotism has roughly the same prestige as acupuncture. In the USA, Tarot readings increasingly purport to be able to help the enquirer to explore his or her inner psyche and so attain self-realisation. This can be far removed from simple divination, initiation in esoterism or realisation of the Divine Self. Personal analysis through Tarot cards constitutes a new phase in their history.

*

There, in five paragraphs, is a synopsis of the sequel that we are *not* going to write. Some existing books on recent Tarotism are: *New Thoughts on Tarot* (North Hollywood, 1989), edited by Rachel Pollack and Mary K. Greer; Rachel Pollack's *The New Tarot* (Wellingborough, 1989, and Woodstock, New York, 1990); Cynthia Giles's *The Tarot: History, Mystery and Lore* (New York, 1992) and her *The Tarot: Methods, Mastery and More* (New York, 1996).

The present book has acquired a shape of its own. In the period that we have surveyed, Tarotism was largely restricted to magical orders and esoteric groups. Those of the XVIII and XIX centuries devised the theories upon which almost all subsequent Tarotism has been based. We have noted the prominent innovators in this lineage, and have examined their doctrinal secrets, including the mutations of the doctrine and the erosion of the secrecy. The story is quite complete.

Notes

Notes to Chapter 0

- [1.](#) Scott 1924, Vol. I, p. 9.
- [2.](#) The unity of 'philosophical' and 'technical' Hermetism is strongly defended by Garth Fowden in *The Egyptian Hermes*, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 116ff, p. 153.
- [3.](#) W. Gundel (ed.), *Neue astrologische Texte des Hermes Trismegistos*, Munich, 1936; Julius Ruska, *Tabula Smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte hermetischen Literatur*, Heidelberg, 1926; H. Ritter (ed.), *Ghayat al-Hakim*, Leipzig, 1933; H. Ritter and M. Plessner (trans.), 'Picatrix': *Das Ziel des Weisen Pseudo-Majriti*, London, 1962; and David Pingree (ed.), *Picatrix: the Latin Version of the Ghayat al-Hakim*, London, 1986.
- [4.](#) For a partial survey, see Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, eight vols., New York, 1923-58.
- [5.](#) So we may judge from the works of Philo, in Egypt, and from the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Qumran.
- [6.](#) Midrash, *Hagigah*, 2:1.
- [7.](#) For this view, see A. Kaplan 1990, p. xvii.
- [8.](#) For variations, see A. Kaplan 1990, pp. 178-9.
- [9.](#) Gnostics and Hermetists regarded the mind as a fiery substance akin to the stars.
- [10.](#) Scholem 1974, p. 107.
- [11.](#) Scholem 1974, p. 423.
- [12.](#) Rittangel erroneously attributes this treatise to Abraham ben David of Posquières (1120-98).
- [13.](#) An interesting example comes from Jean Thénault, chaplain to Francis I of France. See J.L. Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, New York, 1944, pp. 89-98, 121-44, and G. Mallary Masters, 'Renaissance Kabbalah', *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*, Antoine Faivre and Jacob Needleman (eds.), New York, 1992, pp. 132-53.
- [14.](#) Christian authorities tended to use the same terms for angelic choirs, but often differed when ranking them:

Ambrose <i>(Apologia David)</i>	Pseudo-Dionysius <i>(Celestial Hierarchy)</i>	Gregory the Great <i>(Homilia)</i>
Seraphim	Seraphim	Seraphim
Cherubim	Cherubim	Cherubim
Dominationes	Thrones	Thrones
Thrones	Dominationes	Dominationes
Principalities	Principalities	Principalities
Powers	Virtues	Powers

Virtues	Powers	Virtues
Archangels	Archangels	Archangels
Angels	Angels	Angels

[15.](#) Kircher 1652-4, Vol. II (Tome II, Part 1), Classis IV, Cap. III, pp. 224-9.

[16.](#) Epistola XXX ad Paulam; see *Patrologia Latina*, J.P. Migne (ed.), Vol. 22, col. 441-445.

[17.](#) See Colette Sirat, 'La Qabbale d'après Juda b. Solomon ha-Cohen', in Gérard Nahon & Charles Toutai (eds.), *Hommage à Georges Vajda*, Louvain, 1980, pp. 191-202, at pp. 196-7, for an account of Juda ben Solomon's very similar association of letters, including final forms, with celestial spheres and so on, though one not coinciding in detail with that given by Kircher; in particular, Kircher places each final form after the regular form of the letter concerned, whereas Juda ben Solomon places all the final forms together at the end of the alphabet. The two schemes obviously belong to the same circle of ideas.

[18.](#) St Jerome frequently cites homonyms of the names of the letters in his writings, notably in his commentary *In Lamentationes Jeremiae* (*Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 25, col. 787-92), and his *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum* (*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, Vol. 72, pp. 118 et seq.). In Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 16, the list of homonyms in the third column is compiled from Kircher's first and second lists, and 'viri fortes' should be replaced by 'principium'. On page 17, it should have been specified that 'Kircher's' homonyms in fact were borrowed from St Jerome.

[19.](#) The list of these adopted by Kircher differs from those given by the major Cabalistic authorities, namely the *Zohar* II, 43a, the *Masekhet Atziluth* (XIV century) and the *Berith Menuhah* (published 1648). Kircher's spelling is preserved in the following table:

<i>Zohar</i>	<i>Masekhet Atziluth</i>	<i>Berith Menuhah</i>	<i>Kircher</i>
Malachim	Seraphim	Seraphim	Haloth hakodesch
Erelim	Ophanim	Ophanim	Ophanim
Seraphim	Cherubim	Cherubim	Aralim
Hayyoth	Shinnanim	Shinnanim	Haschemalim
Ophanim	Tarshishim	Tarshishim	Seraphim
Hashmalim	Ishim	Hashmalim	Melachim
Elim	Hashmalim	Malakim	Elohim
Elohim	Malakim	Bene Elohim	Benelohim
Bene Elohim	Bene Elohim	Ishim	Cherubim
Ishim	Arelim	Arelim	Ischim

[20.](#) In Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 16, the ranks in the Christian hierarchy thus identified by Kircher are shown in the right-hand column. Powers and Virtues there should be interchanged. Kircher variously departs from the usual Christian authorities on the ranking of angelic choirs (see note 14 above).

[21.](#) For the complete list, see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 16.

[22.](#) Kircher 1652-4, Vol. II, Classis IV, Cap. X, p. 330.

[23.](#) Kircher 1652-4, Vol. II, Classis IV, Cap. X, pp. 334-5. The sequence of planets coincides with that given in Chap. IV, verse 4, of the translation of the *Sepher Yetzirah* by W.W. Westcott, Bath, 1877.

[24.](#) In some copies of Kircher 1652-4, the diagram has been placed opposite p. 289 of Vol. III (Tome II, Part 2), instead of its proper context opposite p. 289 in Vol. II (Tome II, Part 1).

[25.](#) Kircher 1652-4, Vol. II, Classis IV, Cap. IX, §III, pp. 305-7.

[26.](#) See, for example, Rosenroth 1677, Part 4, pp. 246-7 and Rosenroth 1684, Part II, p. 229.

[27.](#) Scholem 1974, p. 417.

[28.](#) Figure XVI is opposite p. 243 of Part 4 of Rosenroth 1677. The list, which appears on pp. 245-6, inadvertently leaves out the pathway from Binah to Daath.

[29.](#) The 'Book of Concealed Wisdom', the 'Great Assembly' and the 'Small Assembly' are especially well supplied with images of sparks, flames and flashing light. See Matt 1983, p. 165, which has 'Blinding Flash', and p. 281, which gives the original Aramaic as *bozina de-qardinuta*. Mathers 1887, p. 177 translates this as 'intense splendour of light', but 'Lightning' is used in the same context on p. 270.

[30.](#) Mathers 1887, pp. 50-4, 104-5, 241, 295.

[31.](#) *Zohar* II, 42b (= Sperling and Simon 1978, Vol. III, p. 132) and 143b-144a (= Sperling and Simon 1978, Vol. IV, pp. 5-6). A 'fountain of Benevolence' is mentioned in the 'Small Assembly'; see Mathers 1887, p. 271.

[32.](#) *Zohar* III, 115a (= Sperling and Simon 1978, Vol. V, p. 158, which has 'great deep'). Matt 1983, p. 158 has 'Great Abyss'. See also Mathers 1887, pp. 198, 241.

[33.](#) *Allgemeine und general Reformation der ganzen weiten Welt. Beneben der Fama Fraternitatis, dess Löblichen Ordens des Rosenkreutzes, an alle gelehrte und Häupter Europae geschrieben*, Cassel, 1614.

[34.](#) Traiano Boccalini, *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, Venice, 1612-13.

[35.](#) *Secretions Philosophiae Consideratio brevis ... una cum Confessione Fraternitatis R.C.*, Cassel, 1615: the letters R.C. were always understood as abbreviating 'Rosea Crux', as in the *Fama remissa ad Fratres Roseae Crucis. Antwort auf die Fama, und Confessio der Bruderschaft von Rosen Creutz* of 1616.

[36.](#) *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz*, Strasbourg, 1616.

[37.](#) In his 'Frances Yates and the Writing of History', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 51, 1979, pp. 287-316, Brian Vickers surveys the exiguous evidence concerning the original Rosicrucians, and conclusively demonstrates that in her book *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, London, 1972, Frances Yates makes ab surdly overblown claims for the significance of the two manifestos.

[38.](#) John Warwick Montgomery, *Cross and Crucible: Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), Phoenix of the Theologians*, 2 vols., The Hague, 1973.

[39.](#) For bibliographical references to the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross, see [Chapter 2](#), note 6.

Notes to Chapter 1

[1.](#) Marsha Keith Schuchard, 'Freemasonry, Secret Societies, and the Continuity of the Occult Tradition in English Literature' (doctoral dissertation for the University of Texas, Austin), 1975, p. 234.

[2.](#) See Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, pp. 51-2, 75-6.

[3.](#) At least one biographer, Trowbridge (1866-1938), is reluctant to identify Cagliostro as Balsamo. See W.R.H. Trowbridge, *Cagliostro* (London and New York, 1926).

[4.](#) Roberto Gervaso, *Cagliostro*, London, 1974, p. 75, argues that the emblem 'seems to have been suggested by an old sage of Nuremberg'. Its symbolism is debatable.

[5.](#) Hamill 1986, p. 96.

[6.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 198.

[7.](#) The passage is not in the first edition (1842), but is in those subsequent (see *Zanoni*, book IV, chapter V).

[8.](#) The lessons appeared posthumously in the magazine *Initiation* in 1891, then in an anthology of Lévi's writings, *Livre des splendeurs*, Paris, 1894. An English translation is *The Book of Splendours*, York Beach, Maine, 1984: see p. 137.

[9.](#) Lévi/Crowley 1959, p. 144.

- [10.](#) Lévi/Crowley 1959, p. 142.
- [11.](#) In the 1880s, this was publicly demonstrated by Margaretta Fox in the presence of Kate Fox. Both later insisted that Margaretta's feat was irrelevant to their mediumship. See Gordon Stein (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Paranormal*, Amherst, New York, 1996, p. 714 (s.v. 'Spiritualism' by G. Stein).
- [12.](#) For example, see Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism*, Princeton, 1964, pp. 81ff, 217.
- [13.](#) Deveney 1997, p. 373.
- [14.](#) Lytton 1842, (Bk. III, ch. V) Part 1, p. 270.
- [15.](#) Lytton 1893, (Bk. VII, ch. IX) Part 3, p. 217.
- [16.](#) R. Swinburne Clymer, *Dr. Paschal Beverly Randolph and the Supreme Grand Dome of the Rosicrucians in France*, Quakertown, Pennsylvania, 1929, p. 9; but see Deveney 1997, p. 142.
- [17.](#) Deveney 1997, pp. 29, 68.
- [18.](#) 'Sirius' [Emma Hardinge Britten], 'Occultism Defined', *Between two Worlds*, Vol. I, no. 1, 18 November 1887, pp. 3-4, and Emma Hardinge Britten, *Autobiography of Emma Hardinge Britten*, Manchester, 1900, p. 4.
- [19.](#) Hamill 1986, p. 133.
- [20.](#) The Blavatsky marriage is usually dated to 1848, but 1849 occasionally appears, as in Cranston 1993, p. 36, and Johnson 1994, p. 1.
- [21.](#) Roberts 1931, pp. 22-3.
- [22.](#) Albert Leighton Rawson, 'Madame Blavatsky – A Theosophical Apology', *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, February 1892, pp. 199-208. Godwin 1994, p. 279, and Johnson 1994, p. 31, apply Rawson's account to Mme Blavatsky's visit to Cairo in 1851. G. Basedon Butt, *Madame Blavatsky*, London, 1926 has her otherwise occupied, travelling in Paris, London, Quebec, New Orleans, Texas and Mexico. This itinerary is repeated by Mary K. Neff, *Personal Memoirs of H.P. Blavatsky*, London, 1937, p. 165. Neff applies Rawson's account to Mme Blavatsky's visit to Cairo in 1871.
- [23.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 282.
- [24.](#) Guénon 1921, p. 14.
- [25.](#) Johnson 1994, p. 88.
- [26.](#) For a study of Mme Blavatsky's possible associates, see Johnson 1994, 'Part One: Adepts'.
- [27.](#) Guénon 1921, p. 17.
- [28.](#) Roberts 1931, p. 38 (repeated in Williams 1946, p. 53).
- [29.](#) Olcott 1895, p. 20.
- [30.](#) Olcott 1895, pp. 37-8.
- [31.](#) Henry S. Olcott, 'Memoirs', *The Theosophist*, Vol. XIII, August 1892, pp. 651-2, reprinted in Olcott 1895, pp. 73-6.
- [32.](#) According to Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1994, p. 74, the term 'Sleep of Sialam' was imported from Indian mysticism into Western occultism.
- [33.](#) Compare Blavatsky 1877, Vol. I, pp. 22-3, with P.B. Randolph, *Dealings with the Dead*, Utica, 1862, pp. 146-9. See also Deveney 1997, pp. 107, 278: Randolph further believed that arrant criminals are among those to experience reincarnation. He thought that his own suffering was in expiation for sins in a past life.
- [34.](#) For Randolph's letter to Olcott, see Deveney 1997, pp. 236-7.
- [35.](#) Jinarajadasa 1925, pp. 21-2.
- [36.](#) Felt was the son of Willard L. Felt and his wife Elizabeth (née Glover). He owned Willard Felt & Co Stationers and printers, New York. George Felt was educated in New York, then inducted into the Union Army during the Civil War. He developed a signal rocket for the army but inappropriately sought to patent it for himself. He married, lived mostly in New York, and died there. For more details, see James A. Santucci, 'Forgotten Magi: George Henry Felt and Ezekiel Perkins', *Le défi magique*, Vol. I: *Ésoterisme, occultisme, spiritisme*, Jean-Baptiste Martin

and François Laplantine (eds.), Lyon, 1994. See also Deveney 1997, pp. 289-293, and Godwin 1994, pp. 286-8.

[37.](#) Olcott 1895, pp. 115-9.

[38.](#) Olcott 1895, p. 128, reproducing Felt's letter to *The London Spiritualist*, 19 June 1878.

[39.](#) Olcott 1895, p. 135.

[40.](#) Deveney 1997, p. 293, quoting from the 'Inaugural Address of the President of the Theosophical Society' in H.S. Olcott, *Applied Theosophy and Other Essays*, 24, Adyar, 1975, pp. 43-44.

[41.](#) Charles Sotheran, Correspondence, *The Banner of Light*, 15 January 1876, p. 5.

[42.](#) Emma Hardinge Britten, Correspondence, *Spiritual Scientist*, Vol. 6, no. 1 6 September 1876, pp. 8-9.

[43.](#) Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon*, New York, 1995, p. 54.

[44.](#) Olcott 1895, pp. 126-31.

[45.](#) Britten, 1876b, p. 155.

[46.](#) Britten 1884, p. 442.

[47.](#) This instance of metempsychosis has been likened to the 'blending' promoted by P.B. Randolph. See Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 58. However, in Randolph's opinion, the process should involve the human's initiative toward contacting the spirit, not vice versa.

[48.](#) We are grateful to Christopher Gibson for this observation.

[49.](#) This is suggested by E.J. Dingwall in his introduction to the reprint of Emma Hardinge Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism*, New York, 1970, p. xvi.

[50.](#) Olcott 1895, pp. 166-83, and (idem) 'Cremation in America', *The Theosophist*, Vol. I, no. 7, April 1880, pp. 187-8.

[51.](#) See Godwin 1994, p. 404, where Louis's birth is dated according to the two historical allusions in *Ghost Land*: the advent of the spiritualist movement (1848) and the Sepoy Mutiny (1857).

[52.](#) Olcott 1895, p. 161.

[53.](#) Britten 1884, p. 439, citing her 1876 letter to the *Spiritual Scientist* (Boston).

[54.](#) Britten 1876a, pp. 26, 340.

[55.](#) Britten 1876a, pp. 8, 201.

[56.](#) Britten 1876a, pp. 190, 307; Britten 1876b, p. 387.

[57.](#) Britten 1876a, pp. 163, 165, 289.

[58.](#) Britten 1884, pp. 31, 123, 304, 305, 338, 346, 379, 519.

[59.](#) Compare Britten 1876a, pp. 263, 264, and Britten, 1876b, p. 111 with Britten 1884, p. 45.

[60.](#) The usual German source is Joseph Ennemoser, *Geschichte der Magie*, Leipzig, 1844 = *The History of Magic*, William Hewitt (trans.), London, 1854.

[61.](#) Britten 1876b, p. 437.

[62.](#) These charges, among others, are repeated by Papus, the French Magus who joined the Theosophical Society (Société Théosophique) but resigned when he became convinced of its fraudulent bases. See Papus, 'L'Affaire de la S.T.', *Voile d'Isis*, 11 February, 1891.

[63.](#) Guénon 1925, pp. 217-21, translated in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, pp. 431-5.

[64.](#) Olcott 1895, p. 479.

[65.](#) Williams 1946, p. 128. At p. 121 we hear from Dr Alexander Wilder (1823-1908), a scholar who had helped to edit *Isis Unveiled*. With consummate ambiguity, he wrote that 'whatever the Baron possessed of value he bestowed on [Mme Blavatsky and Olcott].'

[66.](#) Williams 1946, p. 129.

[67.](#) The sons of H.S. Olcott and his wife Mary Olcott (née Epplee) were Morgan (b. 1861) and William (b. 1862). See Jinarajadasa 1925, p. 18.

[68.](#) Jinarajadasa 1925, p. 52.

[69.](#) In Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 236, Faucheux's first name is incorrectly given as Alfred.

[70.](#) F.-Ch. Barlet, 'The Initiative Tarot', Chapter XVII in Papus, *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*, Paris, 1889 = *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, New York, 1958, pp. 253-72.

[71.](#) Boris de Zirkoff (ed.), *H.P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings, 1883*, Los Angeles, 1950, p. 340.

Notes to Chapter 2

[1.](#) See Greensill 1987, p. 62. Photocopies from this work were kindly provided us by Mr R.A. Gilbert.

[2.](#) Greensill 1987, p. 69.

[3.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 218. In Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 181 incorrectly makes Bulwer-Lytton a president of the S.R.I.A. and cites a date before the society was even founded.

[4.](#) William Carpenter, 'Occult Science', *The Rosicrucian*, Vol. I, no. VII, January 1870, pp. 83-5.

[5.](#) Greensill 1987, p. 62.

[6.](#) For studies of the German Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross, see Horst Möller 'Die Gold- und Rosenkreuzer: Struktur, Zielsetzung und Wirkung einer anti-aufklärischen Geheimgesellschaft', *Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung*, Vol. V, part 1, *Geheime Gesellschaften*, Peter Christian Ludz (ed.), 1979, Heidelberg, pp. 153-202, and McIntosh 1992 together with McIntosh 1987, pp. 82-94 [= 1997, pp. 63-75]. McIntosh 1992 quotes Arnold Marx, *Die Gold- und Rosenkreuzer: ein Mysterienbund des ausgehenden 18ten Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig, 1930, which we have not seen. See also René Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et occultiste aux XVIIe et XIXe siècles*, Paris, 1970, pp. 544-57, 626, 630-1, 676-8 and 712-15 (trans. as *Templar and Occultist Freemasonry in the XVIII and XIX Centuries*), Antoine Faivre, *L'Ésoterisme au XVIIIe siècle en France et en Allemagne*, Paris, 1973, pp. 177-82, and Waite 1924, pp. 439-82. For Mesmer's membership in the Society, see J.M. Roberts, *Mythology of the Secret Societies*, London, 1972, p. 102. For the grades of the S.R.I.A., see 'Rules and Ordinances of the Rosicrucian Society of England', *The Rosicrucian*, Vol. I, no. I, July 1868, pp. 6-9.

[7.](#) McIntosh 1992, p. 73.

[8.](#) See McIntosh 1992, pp. 47-8, 52; McIntosh 1987, p. 89 [= 1997, p. 70].

[9.](#) Paul Christian, *Histoire de la magie*, Paris, 1870, Livre deuxième, Chap. V, p. 146 = Eng. trans. *The History and Practice of Magic*, Ross Nichols (ed.), New York, 1969, Vol. I, p. 125. Christian gives the titles of the grades in French as Zélateur, Théoriste, Praticquant, Philosophe, Adepte mineur, Adepte majeur, Adepte affranchi, Maître du Temple and Mage de la Rose-Croix.

[10.](#) William Carpenter, 'The Rosicrucian Society in Anglia', *The Rosicrucian*, Vol. I, no. XIV, October 1871, p. 181.

[11.](#) William Carpenter, 'Rosicrucians and Rosicrucianism', *The Rosicrucian*, Vol. I, no. XIV, October 1871, p. 171-6; Albert G. Mackey, 'Rosicrucianism', *The Rosicrucian and Red Cross*, Vol. II, no. 21, August 1873, pp. 55-60; Kenneth Mackenzie, *ibid.*, Vol. II, no. 24, April 1874, p. 110.

[12.](#) Waite 1924, pp. 503-29.

[13.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 220; Howe 1972b, p. 259.

[14.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 219.

[15.](#) Hamill 1986, p. 91.

[16.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 219.

[17.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 222; Howe 1972b, p. 260.

[18.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 405, n. 66, citing Howe 1972b, p. 272, which gives the 'prospective members' (August 1883) as: Irwin, Yarker, Ayton and Holland. Godwin adds that 'Ms Geraldine

Beskin, curator of the Yarker Library, named the members (in order) as Holland, Mackenzie, Yarker, Irwin, Hockley, Cox, Westcott and Mathers, in her lecture at the Theosophical History Conference, London, 1989.' The same lecture is thus cited in Küntz 1996b, p. 28, n. 9. According to Hamill 1986, p. 94, Mackenzie wrote to Irwin (24 August 1883), saying 'Regarding the Society of eight ... I fear Bro. Hockley is too advanced in years to join'; but Hockley was certainly a member. See Gilbert 1998, pp. 127, 128, 129.

[19.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 31.

[20.](#) Godwin 1994, p. 222.

[21.](#) Küntz 1996b, p. 19.

[22.](#) See further Küntz 1996b, p. 19.

[23.](#) William Carpenter, 'Symbolic Language', *The Rosicrucian*, Vol. I, no. VII, January 1870, pp. 80-1.

[24.](#) See Paul Charcornac, *Éliphas Lévi, renovateur de l'occultisme en France*, Paris, 1926, pp. 201-3, for Lévi's comments on the visit.

[25.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 27. Howe, quite rightly, disbelieves Westcott's claim about Mackenzie's having been initiated in Germany. It is noteworthy that Mackenzie had returned to London before his 18th birthday.

[26.](#) See H.C. Bruce Wilson, 'History of the S.R.I.A.' Report of the General Assembly of the S.R.I.A., Manchester, 1937, p. 16.

[27.](#) This is stated by Hockley in a letter of 28 March 1873 to F.G. Irwin; see Hamill 1986, pp. 54-5.

[28.](#) Frater Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, VI⁰, 'Philosophical and Cabalistic Magic: a Narrative', *The Rosicrucian and Red Cross*, Vol. II, no. 20, May 1873, pp. 27-34, reprinted in King 1989, pp. 28-38.

[29.](#) Gilbert 1998, p. 130.

[30.](#) He mentioned it in a letter to Westcott of 7 August 1879: see Howe 1985, p. 55.

[31.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 29.

[32.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 29.

[33.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 30.

[34.](#) According to Mathers' widow Moina, 'a strong occult link' bound him to Mackenzie: see p. xii of her preface to the 1926 reprint of S.L. Mathers' *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London, 1887), a partial translation of Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata*.

[35.](#) Waite 1924, p. 566.

[36.](#) See Donald Tyson (ed.), *Three Books of Occult Philosophy Written by Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim*, James Freake (trans.), St Paul, 1993, pp. 288-9.

[37.](#) The Cabalists generated these roots from a sequence of verses in Exodus (14:19-21), each of which has 72 consonants in Hebrew. The verses were written in three consecutive lines (beginning on the right and proceeding 'boustrophedon'); and their consonants were vertically aligned. The three-letter columns, read from the top down, were taken as angelic names, and were taken together as a name for God. See Mathers 1887, p. 171.

[38.](#) In the previous year, 1886, he had published *The Temple Rebuilt*, also using his Latin motto as his pen-name.

[39.](#) Both points are illustrated by the phrase of Lévi rendered by Waite as 'the four suits, namely Clubs, Coins, Swords and Circles or Pantacles, commonly called *Deniers*': see Lévi/Waite 1923, p. 101 (Chapter X of Éliphas Lévi, *Dogme de la haute magie*). Lévi had not meant by *pantacle* a five-pointed star, for which he used the word *pentagramme*. In the original edition of his *Clef des grands mystère* of 1861, there are four illustrations of *pantacles*, of which three are in fact pentagrams, although the fourth is decidedly not. Mary Greer, in correspondence, has kindly drawn our attention to Grand Orient, *Manual of Cartomancy* (London, 1909), p. 126, where the suit is called 'Pantacles'. ('Grand Orient' was a pseudonym of Waite's.) An incorrect hypothesis

to account for the use of the term 'Pentacles' is given in Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 47.

[40.](#) Gilbert 1997, p. 78.

[41.](#) See R.A. Gilbert, 'William Wynn Westcott', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol. 100, 1988, pp. 6-32.

[42.](#) Edward Maitland, *Anna Kingsford: Her Life, Letters, Diary and Work*, Vol. II, London, first edn 1896, p. 255, and 3rd edn 1913, p. 291.

[43.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 40.

[44.](#) We are grateful to R.A. Gilbert for the opportunity to see photocopies of Westcott's sketches.

[45.](#) There is no discernible influence from the Cypher MS, to be discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

[46.](#) Ellic Howe and Hellmut Möller, 'Theodore Reuss: Irregular Freemasonry in Germany, 1900-23', *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol. 91, 1978, pp. 28-46, at p. 33. If this was criticism, Waite was hardly the man to make it. Perhaps with deliberate irony, he wrote in his diary for 4 March 1903 'I look shortly to be the most initiated man in Europe' (Gilbert 1987a, p. 117).

[47.](#) Howe 1972b, p. 39.

[48.](#) Cranston 1993, p. 367, citing a letter to R. Skinner in the Ralston Skinner Collection, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[49.](#) Mathers 1888, p. 11.

[50.](#) See Waite 1910 or Waite 1972, p. 161, and Howe 1972a, p. 30, n. 1.

Notes for Chapter 3

[1.](#) The ideas of Court de Gébelin and of Etteilla were synthesised in Madame Camille Le Normand, *Fortune-Telling by Cards; or, Cartomancy Made Easy*, New York, 1872, pp. 179-83.

[2.](#) Anon., 'The Taro', *The Platonist*, Vol. II, no. 8, August 1885, pp. 126-8.

[3.](#) Waite 1910, p. 159.

[4.](#) The spelling 'Taro' was still being used by the Reverend Ayton in a letter to F.L. Gardner of 1890 quoted in Howe 1972a, pp. 146-7.

[5.](#) For Johnson's biography, see Paul R. Anderson, *Platonism in the Midwest*, New York, pp. 151-185.

[6.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 379, incorrectly cite the article as 'The Chinese Tarot' and give the author as Rev Ayton. While he may have generated the fantasy of the Chinese Tarot mentioned in the article, and may therefore have been the earnest neophyte referred to in it, he was surely not its author.

[7.](#) Anon., 'The Founders of the Church of Light', *The Church of Light Quarterly*, Vol. 45, no. 1, 1987, p. 1.

[8.](#) See the report in the *Leeds Mercury* (10 January, 1883), reproduced in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 350.

[9.](#) The origin of this spelling is obscure. It was subsequently invariably used by members of the Golden Dawn.

[10.](#) Peter Davidson, *Man Know Thyself: The Philosophy of Man*, London, 1878, p. 14; *Man Know Thyself* is a 'supertitle'.

[11.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 23.

[12.](#) Fryar's translation appeared in Thomas Welton, *Mental Magic*, London, 1884. The first two of L.A. Cahagnet's three-volume *Magnétisme: Arcanes de la vie future dévoilés* (Paris, 1848-54) had already appeared in English as *The Celestial Telegraph: or Secrets of the Life to Come Revealed through Magnetism* (London, 1850).

[13.](#) Notably *Sexagma, a Digest of the Works of John Davenport*, Bath, 1888, and *Sub-mundanes, or the Elementaries of the Cabala*, Bath, 1888, a reprint of Philip Ayres's translation

(London, 1680) of the abbé Nicolas de Montfaucon de Villar's occult romance, *Comte de Gabalis*, Paris, 1670.

[14.](#) The document is Bimstein's 1885 marriage certificate, filed at the General Register Office, London, and reproduced in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 294. Those authors question the truth of the data supplied.

[15.](#) Christopher Gibson, 'The Religion of the Stars, the Hermetic Philosophy of C. C. Zain', *Gnosis*, No. 38, winter 1995, p. 60.

[16.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, pp. 281, 284.

[17.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, pp. 9, 436, 442.

[18.](#) Sujata Nahar, *Mother's Chronicles, Book 3: Mirra the Occultist*, Paris, 1989, p. 48.

[19.](#) Johnson 1994, p. 44.

[20.](#) Johnson 1994, p. 45.

[21.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 36, citing one of Ayton's letters in a private collection.

[22.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 348, quotes Ayton as saying that Chintamon met Burgoyne in 1882.

[23.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 324, did not manage to locate the prospectus, but the present authors have seen a copy thanks to the kindness of R.A. Gilbert. Signatories to the prospectus included at least three members who would later join the famous Golden Dawn, with temples called 'Isis-Urania' and 'Amen-Ra': G. (George) Dickson of Edinburgh (joined Isis-Urania in October 1888, and Amen-Ra as founder member in December 1893, later Isis again, at the 5 = 6 grade, in February 1896) and F. J. (Frederick Jabez) Johnson of London (joined Isis-Urania in October 1889, attained the 5 = 6 grade in January 1893) and Ayton, whom we will meet often.

[24.](#) *The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, January 1887, pp. 255-6, reproduced in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 366-9.

[25.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 365.

[26.](#) Gilbert 1987b, p. 11. Thomas Henry Pattinson later joined the Golden Dawn and became Imperator of the Horus Temple at Bradford.

[27.](#) For the biographies of Burgoyne and Davidson in America, we are indebted to Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, pp. 27-32, 37-9. See also Godwin 1994, pp. 350-60.

[28.](#) Anon., 'Periodical Literature', *The Occult Review*, May 1925, pp. 326-7, quoted in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney, p. 436; cf. p. 64.

[29.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 39.

[30.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 3; on p. 299, the name 'Holy Brothers of Luxor' is indicated.

[31.](#) T.H. Burgoyne, 'The Taro', *The Platonist*, Vol. III, 1887, pp. 354-7, 407-10, 478-82, 571-6, 655-60, Vol. IV, 1888, pp. 41-7.

[32.](#) The impulse to co-ordinate the four suits with the four elements can also be found in the writings of Etteilla and of Lévi.

[33.](#) 'Zanoni' [T.H. Burgoyne], *The Light of Egypt*, 1889, p. 258 (reprint 1969, Vol. 1, p. 268).

[34.](#) Anon., 'The Taro', *Theosophical Siftings*, published by the Theosophical Publishing Company, Vol. I, no. 14, November 1888, pp. 17-19.

[35.](#) Peter Davidson, 'Origin and Object of the H.B. of L.', *Textes et Documents secrets de la Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor*, Milan, 1988, p. 4. A slightly different version is in Guénon 1925, pp. 217-8.

[36.](#) Deveney 1997, pp. 207-8.

[37.](#) Johnson 1994, p. 86.

[38.](#) David Board, 'The Brotherhood of Light and the Brotherhood of Luxor', *Theosophical History*, Vol. 2, no. 5, January 1988, pp. 149-57.

- [39](#). Howe 1985, p. 58, quoting a letter to F.G. Irwin from Ayton (29 December 1890).
- [40](#). Henry S. Olcott, 'Memoirs', *The Theosophist*, Vol. XIII, August 1892, p. 652, reprinted in Olcott 1895, p. 76.
- [41](#). Mackenzie 1877, p. 309.
- [42](#). He credited them with supernatural powers (invisibility, omniscience and immortality), and he vacillated about the number of members whom he had encountered (three or six).
- [43](#). Mackenzie 1877, p. 461.
- [44](#). Blavatsky 1877, Vol. II, p. 308.
- [45](#). Blavatsky 1966, p. 125 n 2.
- [46](#). The entire theory has received new attention. See Joscelyn Godwin, 'The Hidden Hand', *Theosophical History*, New Series III, nos. 2-5, 1990-1, pp. 35-43, 66-76, 107-117, 137-48; Godwin 1994, pp. 198-9; Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, pp. 56ff; Deveney 1997, pp. xxi, xxv, 259-60.
- [47](#). René Guénon, 'Quelque précisions à propos de la H.B. of L.', *Le Voile d'Isis*, Vol. 30, no. 70, October 1925, p. 593, translated in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 440. Guénon is in accord with 'Quaestor Vitae', who published two articles in the journal *Light*, November 1895, reprinted as 'The Real Origin of the Theosophical Society', *Theosophical History*, Vol. 1, no. 7, July 1986, pp. 176ff. Cf. Deveney 1997, p. 532.
- [48](#). Olcott 1895, p. 121, 122.
- [49](#). Guénon 1921, p. 25, and Guénon, p. 218, translated in Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 432.
- [50](#). Éliphas Lévi renders 'or' as 'aour', an acceptable variation in the transliteration of Hebrew. See Lévi/Waite 1923, pp. 74 n, 194, 282 n (with references to Lévi's *La Clef des grands mystères*, Paris, 1861).

Notes to Chapter 4

- [1](#). Complete reproductions of the Cypher MS, as Westcott had it, with transcriptions on facing pages, are given in Küntz 1996a and in Runyon 1997. Küntz and Runyon number the sheets of the MS differently; but since Küntz calls them 'folios' while Runyon calls them 'pages', this provides a convenient way of distinguishing the two numberings.
- [2](#). Numbering, presumably added later, gives the order of sheets in each section, but is not continuous through the whole MS.
- [3](#). Abbot Johann Tritheim (Joannes Trithemius) (1462-1516), *Polygraphiae libri sex*, first published Oppenheim, 1518, with several later editions.
- [4](#). The title 'Order of the Golden Dawn', with its Hebrew equivalent, is given on folio 1 = page 58. Runyon considers this sheet a later addition, but in any case the phrase 'this temple of the Golden Dawn' is used on the first page of the ceremony for admitting a neophyte, folio 3 = page 2.
- [5](#). McIntosh 1992, pp. 175-6; Godwin 1994, pp. 122-3.
- [6](#). W.W. Westcott, 'The Rosicrucians, past and present, at home and abroad', address to the S.R.I.A., privately printed 1913, reprinted in Gilbert 1983c, pp. 40-7, at p. 44; see also p. 33.
- [7](#). Howe 1972a, p. 9.
- [8](#). Küntz 1996a, p. 35, refers to a German translation of 1857, but K. R. Lepsius issued the *Todtenbuch der Ägypter* in 1842. Folio 8 = page 8 of the Cypher MS, which contained the reference, was replaced, presumably by Westcott, by an expurgated version, folio 9 = page 7, which omitted it.
- [9](#). Pianco 1781.
- [10](#). The 22 trumps are specified as one of the 'necessary studies' of the Zelator on folio 16 = page 13, and the four suits are listed under 'Knowledge of the Zelator' on folio 17 = page 15. We

are grateful to Mary Greer for drawing our attention to this detail before we had seen Küntz 1996a.

[11.](#) The need to establish such a correspondence arose from the traditional difference, explained in the Foreword, in the order of the numeral cards in the long suits and the round ones. This seemingly bizarre feature was faithfully observed by all players of the game save in France and Sicily, where it was abandoned as pointless. For this reason it was not known to the French occultists nor, accordingly, to their British successors; both would surely have made much of it had they known of it.

[12.](#) Folios 3 and 5 = pages 2 and 4. Küntz erroneously says that ‘que’ should precede ‘fratres’, and Runyon adds ‘(sic)’ after ‘fratresque’.

[13.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 11.

[14.](#) Mackenzie 1877, p. 616; the table is on the facing page.

[15.](#) F. Leigh Gardner, *A Catalogue Raisonné of works on the Occult Sciences*, Vol. I, *Rosicrucian Books*, 1st edn, privately printed, London, 1903, p. 19, no. 132, and 2nd edn, privately printed, [Leipzig], 1923, p. 25, no. 179; subsequently in Waite 1924, p. 566. Gardner says that it was left to him to discover that Mackenzie had copied the table from Magister Pianco's book, and he was almost certainly right.

[16.](#) Pianco 1781, between pp. 84 and 85; Mackenzie's table is translated into English from Pianco's German. The book by ‘Magister Pianco’ is commonly attributed either to Hans Carl von Ecker und Eckhoffen, or more often to his brother Hans Heinrich, who is said to have been expelled in 1781 from the Society of the Golden and Rosy Cross, to whose refusal to admit Jews he objected. The author of the book may rather have been F.G.E. Weisse: see McIntosh 1992, p. 133, and Waite 1924, p. 444n.

[17.](#) Folio 2 = page 1. Runyon 1997, p. 40, considers that this page may have been a later addition.

[18.](#) It is incorporated into the article on the Rosy Cross in Mackenzie 1877.

[19.](#) E.g. folios 8, 27, 33, 36, 49 and 50 = pages 8, 23, 30, 33, 47 and 48.

[20.](#) E.g. folios 16, 21, 22, 30 and 48 = pages 13, 19, 20, 26 and 46.

[21.](#) Folios 15 and 16 = pages 12 and 13.

[22.](#) Folio 2 = page 1; see note 17.

[23.](#) Folio 50 = page 48.

[24.](#) Folio 8 = page 8 in the original version; folio 9 = page 7 in the amended one.

[25.](#) ‘The Historic Lecture’; see Küntz 1996b, p. 47, and Gilbert 1983a, pp. 100-1.

[26.](#) They roughly corresponded to Mme Blavatsky's Masters.

[27.](#) See folios 16, 23, 30 and 50 = pages 13, 21, 26 and 48. For the use of these ‘Brotherhood names’ in Golden Dawn rituals, see Regardie 1986, pp. 152, 164, 179, 195 and 230. W.B. Yeats used ‘The Unicorn from the Stars’ as the title of one of his plays.

[28.](#) See folios 8, 27, 33, 36, 49 and 50 = pages 8, 23, 30, 33, 47 and 48. In the commentary to his fig. XVI of Part 4, giving the diagram of our fig. 6, von Rosenroth twice numbers the *sephiroth*, including Daath, from 1 to 11, Daath receiving the number 4: see Rosenroth 1677, Part 4, pp. 246-9.

[29.](#) See folios 14, 18, 22, 25, 28, 29, 42 and 43 = pages 10, 16, 20, 22, 24, 25, 39 and 40.

[30.](#) Folio 50 = page 48. Instruction by demonstration is a frequent feature of the admission rituals.

[31.](#) Folios 53 and 54 = pages 51 and 50.

[32.](#) See Runyon 1977, pp. 224-5.

[33.](#) Folio 33 = page 30. See note 19 to [Chapter 0](#).

[34.](#) Folio 45 = page 43.

[35.](#) Folio 14 = page 10.

[36.](#) See folios 36-41 = pages 33-8.

- [37.](#) Runyon 1997, p. 38.
- [38.](#) Folio 35 = page 32; Küntz misprints 'XIX' as 'XIV' in the column headed 'Key', and, more seriously, 'VIII' as 'XIII' in the column headed 'Tarot trump'. Folios 17 and 24 = pages 15 and 21a (pp. 241-2), on knowledge needed for promotion to Theoricus and Practicus respectively, each contains a little about the Tarot suits, but does not overlap the Tarot lecture.
- [39.](#) Waite 1924, p. 584; Waite 1938, p. 225.
- [40.](#) Some of John Dee's mystical works were preserved in his original manuscripts. They were partly reproduced in Meric Casaubon's *A True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr John Dee ... and Some Spirits*, London, 1659.
- [41.](#) Runyon 1997, pp. 15 and 33, argues that the encipherment was carried out by an assistant 'scribe'.
- [42.](#) At pp. 214-15 of his 'From Cipher to Enigma: the Role of William Wynn Westcott in the Creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn', in Runyon 1997, pp. 204-22.
- [43.](#) In Gilbert 1998, a lecture given in April 1997.
- [44.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 12; Küntz 1996b, p. 37.
- [45.](#) Gilbert, 'From Cipher to Enigma', in Runyon 1997, p. 210.
- [46.](#) Küntz 1996b, p. 39.
- [47.](#) Runyon 1997 includes in its bibliography another translation by Westcott, also published in 1887, *The Chaldean Oracles of Julianus* (i.e. the Chaldean Oracles attributed to Julian the Theurgist); but neither the British Library nor the Bodleian has a copy of this book.
- [48.](#) Her name is so given in the Golden Dawn Address Book, presumably dating from 1888; this information was kindly given to us by Mr R.A. Gilbert.
- [49.](#) Gilbert 1998.
- [50.](#) Folio 59 in Küntz 1996a, addendum (p. 179) in Runyon 1997.
- [51.](#) Küntz 1996b, p. 37; Howe 1972a, p. 9.
- [52.](#) See Küntz 1996b, p. 39. The letters allegedly from Fräulein Sprengel are reproduced in English translation in Gilbert 1983a, pp. 95-8, and in Küntz 1996b, pp. 40-5. We are grateful to Mr R.A. Gilbert for allowing us to see photographs of the German originals.
- [53.](#) Gilbert 1983a, pp. 95-6; Küntz 1996b, p. 40; Howe 1972a, pp. 14-15.
- [54.](#) Gilbert 1983a, p. 96; Küntz 1996b, p. 41; Howe 1972a, pp. 17-18.
- [55.](#) Küntz 1996b, frontispiece and pp. 41-2; Howe 1972a, Plate IV and pp. 18-19.
- [56.](#) For some reason, Lévi's name was always so spelled by members of the Golden Dawn.
- [57.](#) Regardie 1983, pp. 69, 124; Howe 1972a, p. 59.
- [58.](#) Gilbert 1986, pp. 139-40.
- [59.](#) Gilbert 1983a, pp. 96-7; Küntz 1996b, pp. 43-4; Howe 1972a, pp. 19-21.
- [60.](#) Gilbert 1983a, p. 98; Küntz 1996b, p. 45; Howe 1972a, p. 22.

Notes to Chapter 5

- [1.](#) The fundamental work on the history of the Golden Dawn is Howe 1972a. Other books essential for a close study of this subject are: Harper 1974; King 1989; Colquhoun 1975; Stoddart 1930; Waite 1938; Regardie 1983; Symonds 1973; Greer 1995; Gilbert 1983a, 1986 and 1997; and Küntz 1996b. These overlap considerably, recounting the same events from different perspectives, and sometimes contradict one another; but all contain facts or quote documents omitted by the others. Aleister Crowley's *Equinox* should also be consulted, with caution since his contributions are tainted by malice and misrepresentation. Regardie 1937-40 contains details of G.D. rituals and teachings. Also interesting are Moore 1954 and Ellman 1979.
- [2.](#) Greer 1995, pp. 40-5.
- [3.](#) Greer 1995, pp. 66-75.
- [4.](#) Greer 1995, p. 365, from Sheila Gooddie, *Annie Horniman: a Pioneer in the Theatre*, London, 1990, p. 79.

5. Howe 1972a, pp. 65-6.
6. W.W. Westcott, 'Data of the History of the Rosicrucians', published by the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, second edn, 1916, reprinted in Gilbert 1983c, pp. 28-39; see p. 36.
7. See Gilbert 1987b. The two members concerned were Oliver Firth and F.D. Harrison. Many members of the Horus Temple also belonged to the local lodge of the T.S., and considerable friction existed between the two bodies.
8. As stated, for example, in the 'Ordinances of the First Order of the G.D. in the Outer', no. 7; see Gilbert 1986, p. 47.
9. Howe 1972a, pp. 76-7.
10. The date for Florence Farr is given by Greer 1995, p. 107, without a reference; it is not corroborated by Howe 1972a or Gilbert 1986.
11. Howe 1972a, p. 96.
12. Howe 1972a, pp. 86-7.
13. Howe 1972a, p. 97.
14. See Küntz 1996a, folios 37-41 = Runyon 1997, pages 34-8. See also the quotation from the Cypher MS in Westcott's treatise 'On the Tarot Trumps', printed from a manuscript of Mathers in Gilbert 1983b, at pp. 81-2.
15. An idea of these hand-made packs can be obtained from some recently published reproductions: Darcy Küntz (ed.), *The Golden Dawn Court Cards as drawn by William Wynn Westcott & Moina Mathers*, with an introduction by Anthony Fleming, Edmonds, Washington, 1996; and a reproduction of R.W. Felkin's pack made available to us by Mary Greer, with the permission of Chic Cicero, *An original Tarot Deck from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*, Nevada City, California, 1997.
16. See Paul Huson, *The Devil's Picturebook*, New York, 1971, pp. 93-5 (paper back, pp. 102-3); Francis King (ed.), *Astral Projection, Magic and Alchemy*, London, 1971, p. 51; Richard Cavendish, *The Tarot*, London & New York, 1975, pp. 45, 145; Robert Wang, *An Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot*, Wellingborough, 1978, p. 39.

Notes to Chapter 6

1. The pamphlet, was entitled *Internal Respiration: or the Plenary Gift of the Holy Spirit*: Howe 1972a, p. 174.
2. Gilbert 1986, p. 32.
3. Greer 1995, p. 155.
4. She did not want her money used for political purposes of which she disapproved. Presumably the July payment was the third of the four promised instalments.
5. See Howe 1972a, pp. 106-9, Greer 1995, pp. 170-3 and King 1987, p. 123; it is also referred to in King 1989, p. 52, and Crowley 1973, p. 149. The text of the entire ceremony was printed in Aleister Crowley's journal *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. III, March 1910, pp. 170-90, as 'Ritual for the Evocation unto Visible Appearance of the Great Spirit Taphthartharath', in a version said by Crowley to have been the original one by Allan Bennett, before revision by Florence Farr. It is also said to have been composed in accordance with Book I on 'Practical Evocation' of the Golden Dawn manuscript Z.2 (which has not been published).
6. The full text of the Manifesto is printed in Howe 1972a, pp. 127-33. Mathers was far from abiding by his own injunction against 'the most pernicious sin' of 'uncharitableness towards your neighbour': when he was the guest of T.H. Pattinson, Imperator of the Horus Temple in Bradford, for a short time in 1898, Pattinson had to tell him that he 'would not permit such unfair, unjust and unfraternal attacks' as Mathers had been making on Westcott (Howe 1972a, p. 196).
7. Howe 1972a, pp. 134-5.
8. Greer 1995, p. 185.
9. Howe 1972a, pp. 165-6; Küntz 1996b, pp. 67-8.

- [10.](#) In a private communication.
- [11.](#) Gilbert 1986, p. 38, Howe 1972a, p. 190.
- [12.](#) The pamphlet was called *The Man, the Seer, the Avatar; or T.L. Harris, the Inspired Messenger of the Cycle*. Howe 1972a, pp. 119n, 174, identifies the author as a namesake, Dr C.M. Berridge, of Dr Edward Berridge; but it seems likely that the two names refer to the same person. Gilbert 1997, p. 158, states flatly that 'Respiro' was used as a pseudonym by Dr Edward Berridge, whose motto in the G.D. was 'Resurgam'.
- [13.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 178; Gilbert 1997, pp. 160-1.
- [14.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 188.
- [15.](#) According to Lindholm 1993, p. 104, Crowley's sexual activity began at the age of 12 or 13; Wilson 1971 gives the age of 14. Crowley's biographers, including Crowley himself, are vague and contradictory about the dates of events in his life.
- [16.](#) The discovery, according to most biographers, was of his mystical nature; but Wilson 1987, p. 38, thinks that Crowley discovered his homosexual desires while attending a wild party on New Year's Eve.
- [17.](#) According to Suster 1987, p. 25, unpublished accounts by Crowley say that he lived with Pollitt 'as his wife'.
- [18.](#) One of Shelley's most flaccid poems, 'Alastor; or, the Spirit of Solitude', surely prompted Edward Alexander Crowley to name himself Aleister. On this point, Crowley says only that he repudiated 'Alexander' as the name by which his mother called him, and adopted 'Aleister' as the Gaelic form (Crowley 1970, p. 140). For allusions to the poem, see Crowley 1970, pp. 228, 334, 425, 653.
- [19.](#) Howe 1972a, pp. 200-2, Greer 1995, p. 222.
- [20.](#) It was at this stage that he adopted 'Aleister' as the form of his first name.
- [21.](#) See Colquhoun 1975, p. 174, and Moore 1954, pp. 160 ff.
- [22.](#) Greer 1995, p. 243.
- [23.](#) Greer 1995, p. 232.
- [24.](#) See Howe 1972a, p. 223.
- [25.](#) Crowley wrote in his private journal that this was due to Mathers' anti-English political activities: Greer 1995, p. 235.
- [26.](#) Also, a friend had written to warn Crowley to stay clear of London, as he and his friends were all being watched by the police; this probably concerned a homosexual affair. See Howe 1972a, p. 206.
- [27.](#) A letter of 20 February 1900 from Westcott to Gardner speaks of a letter from a Robert Scott, otherwise unknown, telling him of a coming G.D. meeting at which Westcott was to be asked to become Chief again; Westcott had replied that he could not again take up office in the Society.
- [28.](#) The three highest Chiefs, presumably Mathers' contacts, were named in a G.D. ritual as Hugo Alverda, the Phrisian [sic]; Franciscus de Bry, the Gaul; and Elman Zata, the Arab. See Colquhoun 1975, p. 39, and Regardie 1937-40, pp. 272-7.
- [29.](#) On 17 April E. A. Hunter informed Aleister Crowley and Elaine Simpson that Mathers's authority had been suspended at a duly convened meeting of the members; this must have happened at the meeting of 24 February. King 1989, p. 69, says that Mathers was deposed and expelled at a General Meeting on 29 March, but this statement involves a confusion between a Committee meeting on that day and a General Meeting on 21 April.
- [30.](#) Greer 1995, p. 240.
- [31.](#) *The Key of Solomon the King*, trans. S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers (trans.), London, 1889, Preface, p. vi.
- [32.](#) The previous three had all died, two of them within a year of marrying her.

[33.](#) For detailed accounts of the doings of Mr and Mrs 'Horos', see King 1989, pp. 73-93, and Dingwall 1947, pp. 129-59, 194-8. Greer 1995, p. 439, note 8, gives a useful résumé of Dingwall's account. According to a letter from Mrs Rand to Annie Horniman, Mrs Horos also told Mathers that the reason for her being so stout was that she had absorbed the spirit of Mme Blavatsky when that lady died: Howe 1972, p. 205.

[34.](#) Howe 1972a, pp. 203-4, Greer 1995, p. 237, Gilbert 1997, pp. 15-16.

[35.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 237.

[36.](#) Howe 1972a, pp. 203-4, Greer 1995, p. 250.

[37.](#) The bulk of the Order's instructional papers were published by Regardie 1937-40. See Regardie 1986.

Notes to Chapter 7

[1.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 226, Harper 1974, p. 218.

[2.](#) 'If his accusation of forgery be true, he has knowingly, and on his own showing for many years made use of that forgery for his authority as Chief; if his statement be false, he has been guilty of a slander on one to whom he was bound by the most solemn pledges of fraternity and fidelity': see Howe 1972a, p. 228.

[3.](#) For the dissentients, see King 1989, p. 69n. Colonel Webber Smith is consistently referred to by King, and once by Howe, simply as 'Col. Webber'. The General Meeting of 21 April should not be confused with the meeting of the Committee on 29 March, as it is by King; see Howe 1972a, p. 215.

[4.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 113.

[5.](#) Harper, pp. 219-20.

[6.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 228, Gilbert 1986, pp. 73-8.

[7.](#) Harper, pp. 276-7, Gilbert 1986, pp. 57-8.

[8.](#) See Gilbert 1986, p. 40.

[9.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 237.

[10.](#) In the first of his open letters to the Adepts, Yeats stated that, of the eleven members of the Council, seven belonged to a 'group of twelve', presumably the Sphere, one to a smaller group under the same leader (Florence Farr), and one was married to a member of the larger group. From Annie Horniman's 'Account of the Executive Difficulty', it can be inferred that the member of the smaller group was Mrs Reena Fulham-Hughes, and from that and Yeats's letter that the person married to a member of the Sphere was Mrs Felkin. It is a little difficult to work out who the 'eleven' members of the Council were. Eight voted on the final resolution, Mrs Felkin abstaining and Mrs Rand and Mrs Paget having previously left; but Palmer Thomas, though not one of the ten Adepts appointed to the Council, was undoubtedly present.

[11.](#) These, with many other interesting documents, including Yeats's pamphlet, are helpfully reprinted as appendices to Harper 1974.

[12.](#) They signed as 'late Scribe' and 'late Imperator of Isis-Urania'. Brodie-Innes signed as 'late Imperator of Amen-Ra', but in his case he had not held the post for some years. The Amen-Ra Temple was at that time under the Mathers obedience.

[13.](#) That is, the Obligation undertaken by every member on admission to the grade of Adeptus Minor, and repeated on behalf of the whole Second Order by the Chief Adept at the Corpus Christi ceremony.

[14.](#) Harper 1974, pp. 259-70.

[15.](#) Gilbert 1997, pp. 13-15.

[16.](#) The rite was known as S.O.S.; Gilbert 1997, p. 147.

[17.](#) Gilbert 1986, pp. 62-6.

[18.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 242, Gilbert 1983a, p. 43. King 1989, p. 94, says, on the contrary, that the triumvirate originally consisted of Brodie-Innes, Percy Bullock and Marcus Worsley Blackden,

but that Bullock soon resigned and was replaced by Felkin; also that they were elected for a second year. None of this appears to be correct.

[19.](#) Harper 1974, pp. 278-82.

[20.](#) Harper 1974, pp. 283-4.

[21.](#) Harper 1974, pp. 285-9.

[22.](#) The letter is one of several reproduced photographically as Appendix IV in Lady Queenborough, *Occult Theocracy*, 1933; we owe the reference to Gilbert 1983c, p. 9. Baroness Queenborough (Edith Starr Miller Paget) died in 1933, and the two volumes of her *Occult Theocracy* were published posthumously for private circulation in that year, under the auspices of the International League for Historical Research. They were reprinted in 1968 in one volume at Hawthorne, Calif., by the Christian Book Club of America.

[23.](#) Colquhoun 1975, p. 58, asserts that, around 1920, she belonged to a Christian Theosophical group, the Quest Society, to which Moina Mathers also belonged.

[24.](#) Also a second edition of *The Mysteries of Magic*.

[25.](#) See Gilbert 1987a, pp. 172-6.

[26.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 117.

[27.](#) Waite 1938, p. 228.

[28.](#) See Gilbert 1987a, pp. 117-18. Gilbert is quoting from the entry to Waite's diary for 3 May 1903, but this was evidently written after that date, since, speaking of Bullock, it contains the phrase 'chief as he was at the moment, though he has now retired'. By Waite's argument, the Order had been in abeyance since Woodman's death in 1891, but no one pointed this out.

[29.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 119.

[30.](#) From a letter to Brodie-Innes of 1 August 1903; see Howe 1972a, p. 253. Waite liked the phrase so much that he repeated it in letters of 7 and 18 November (*ibid.*, pp. 254-5).

[31.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 118.

[32.](#) Stoddart 1930, p. 86, quoting a manuscript history of the Order by Felkin, mentions the seizure of the properties. Gilbert 1983a, p. 69, refers to 'Waite's coup d'état of 4 July', without anywhere explaining in what this consisted; nothing is said about it in Gilbert 1987a. Waite referred to the date in a letter to Brodie-Innes of 18 November which spoke of a concordat's having been agreed to by Dr Felkin 'prior to 4th July'.

[33.](#) Gilbert 1987a, pp. 177-9; Gilbert 1983a prints the manifesto as Appendix G.

[34.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 254.

[35.](#) Colquhoun 1975, p. 204, says that 'the Silver Star' was the name of the Golden Dawn's inner order. This is denied by Israel Regardie, who belonged to the Stella Matutina. He suggests instead that Crowley borrowed the name from the Popess card of the Tarot, known to initiates as 'The Priestess of the Silver Star': see Regardie 1970, p. 359.

[36.](#) All included in Crowley 1983.

[37.](#) Gilbert 1997, pp. 89-90.

[38.](#) For illustrations, see King 1987, p. 127. The entire *Equinox* was reissued as a ten-volume set, now reprinted by Samuel Weiser, York Beach, Maine.

Notes to Chapter 8

[1.](#) To anyone not conversant with occultist theory, this little book would seem overpoweringly boring, consisting as it does of list after list of correspondences; but to anyone already committed to occultism, it would be a work of prime utility and importance.

[2.](#) R.A. Gilbert, 'From Cipher to Enigma: the Role of William Wynn Westcott in the Creation of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn', in Runyon 1997, pp. 204-22, at p. 208; Gilbert 1997, pp. 85-8.

[3.](#) See Howe 1972a, p. 43n., and King 1989, p. 115.

4. 'Notes of the Month', *Occult Review*, Vol. XI, pp. 233-9; the editor at the time was Ralph Shirley.

5. Crowley 1970, p. 626.

6. Regardie 1970, p. 409-10.

7. See Lindholm 1993, p. 112, and Colquhoun 1975, p. 247.

8. V.N., 'The Truth about the Tarot Trumps', *The Occult Review*, Vol. XI, no. 5, May 1910, pp. 258-63; repr. in Waite 1996, pp. 40-5.

9. Nothing else was ever published in the *Occult Review* under the initials 'V.N.', and nothing under the name of G.C. Jones or the motto 'Volo Noscere'. There is one contribution, a poem, by Victor Neuburg under his full name, in the *Occult Review* for June 1925, Vol. XLI, pp. 352-3.

10. A detailed life of Pamela Colman Smith, with many illustrations of her works, forms [chapter 1](#) of S. Kaplan 1990; Greer 1995 devotes an appendix to her. Our information derives in part from these two books and in part from helpful information kindly given by Dr Melinda Boyd Parsons, who is making a close study of the life and work of the artist.

11. S. Kaplan 1990, Vol. III, p. 10, says 'between 1901 and 1903'. Gilbert 1986, p. 161, reproducing the membership rolls, says 'no date: probably 2 November 1901'.

12. V.N.'s article published in May 1910 refers to them; moreover, Grand Orient's *Manual of Cartomancy* of 1909, published by Rider & Co., states that they are obtainable from the publisher.

13. Quoted in S. Kaplan 1990, p. 30.

14. This was of course an impertinence. The Tarot de Marseille, as one of the great classic patterns, could not be superseded; one respect in which the so-called Rider-Waite pack made no attempt to supersede it was as an instrument of card play.

15. Mendes was an ancient Egyptian city at the mouth of the Nile whose inhabitants worshipped a goat-headed deity.

16. After the author's pseudonym on the title-page appeared the words *Sapiens dominabitur astris*, the personal motto of Fräulein Sprengel. This is a minor mystery, since Waite was not to join the Golden Dawn for another two years; but the motto had also been used by Anna Kingsford on the title-page of a book edited by her and published in 1886. We are grateful to Mary Greer for pointing out to us that the section on the English method of cartomancy appears to be substantially, though not wholly, derived from Robert Chambers, *A Book of Days*, 2 vols., London, 1864-5. This is an immense compilation of miscellaneous information; in Vol. I, pp. 281-4, what is alleged to be the method of telling fortunes by cards universally used in England is described. The interpretations of most, though not all, of the 52 individual cards tally with those given by Grand Orient.

17. *Manual*, 1909, pp. 125-46, 1912, pp. 140-59; repr. in Waite 1996, pp. 20-30.

18. Waite's placing of the Ace at the head of each suit is another example of the occultists' ignorance of the traditional ranking as observed by players of the game. At the time the Tarot pack was invented, the Ace had not yet started its climb to the highest position, but was simply in sequence with the 2, 3, ... , as it is in all versions of the game of Tarot.

19. And indirectly Etteilla: see [Chapter 4](#).

20. *The Occult Review*, Vol. X, no. 12, December 1909, pp. 307-17; repr. in Waite 1996, pp. 13-19.

21. In his 'Figures in a Dance: W.B. Yeats and the Waite-Rider Tarot', a lecture given to the Golden Dawn conference held in London in April 1987, Roger Parisious has suggested that the other helper was W.B. Yeats.

22. His criticisms of Lévi aroused Aleister Crowley to ungoverned fury. In his Preface to *The Mysteries of Magic*, Waite had pointed out that in his *Histoire de la magie* Lévi had contradicted some of the things he had said in the earlier *Dogme et rituel*. Crowley commented, in the Preface to Lévi/Crowley 1959, that the work he had translated 'represents the high-water mark of the

thought of Éliphas Lévi ... He is beginning to see something of the contradiction inherent in the nature of things ... This, and the extraordinarily subtle and delicate irony of which Éliphas Lévi is one of the greatest masters that has ever lived, have baffled the pedantry and stupidity of such commentators as Waite. English has hardly a word to express the mental condition of such unfortunates'. He goes on to say that 'the "contradictions" which leave Waite petulant and bewildered' can be reconciled, but, of course, only on a higher plane. Crowley laid about him with a bludgeon; Waite's weapon against his fellow-occultists was a dagger.

[23.](#) Waite 1910, pp. 6-8, 82-3; Waite 1972, pp. 4-5, 73. Some idea of what Waite took the secret tradition to be may be gained from a previously unpublished discourse 'The Tarot and the Rosy Cross', evidently delivered to the members of his Rectified Rite, in or before 1910, printed in Waite 1996, pp. 31-9. This relies on the Cypher MS, 'on which we depend for our guidance', and endorses the G.D. attribution of the Tarot trumps to the paths of the Tree of Life. It is primarily concerned with connecting those paths with progress through the grades of the Order, and has very little to say about the Tarot.

[24.](#) Waite 1910, pp. 6-8; Waite 1972, pp. 4-5.

[25.](#) Waite 1910, p. 94; Waite 1972, pp. 83-4.

[26.](#) Waite 1910, pp. 82-4; Waite 1972, pp. 72-4.

[27.](#) Waite 1910, pp. 86-106; Waite 1972, pp. 76-95.

[28.](#) Waite 1910, pp. 97-8; Waite 1972, pp. 86-7.

[29.](#) Waite 1910, p. 147; Waite 1972, p. 130.

[30.](#) Waite 1910, p. 107; Waite 1972, p. 96.

[31.](#) Waite 1910, p. 85; Waite 1972, p. 75.

[32.](#) 'A description of the cards of the Tarot', *The Equinox*, Vol. 1, no. 8, autumn 1912; reprinted in booklet form, New York, 1978.

[33.](#) Waite 1911, p. 64.

[34.](#) Lévi/Waite 1923, p. 469n (repr. 1968, p. 383n).

[35.](#) É. Lévi, *The History of Magic*, A.E. Waite (trans.), London, 1913, repr. 1922, p. 79, n. 2 (by Waite), and New York, 1948, p. 84n. (The original is É. Lévi, *Histoire de la magie*, Paris, 1860.)

[36.](#) The theme was psychologised by Jung, but his ideas were anticipated by Mrs Mary Atwood's *A Suggestive Enquiry into Hermetic Mystery and Alchemy* (London, 1850, reprinted 1918) and Ethan Allen Hitchcock's *Remarks upon Alchemy and the Alchemists* (Boston, 1857). Waite relied heavily on both authors in the introductory essay to his *Alchemists through the Ages*, although he withheld Mrs Atwood's name and wrongly dated Hitchcock's book to 1865.

[37.](#) Waite 1910, p. 105; Waite 1972, p. 94.

[38.](#) See Regardie 1986, p. 602.

[39.](#) Waite 1911, p. 119.

[40.](#) Waite 1911, p. 123.

[41.](#) In his *New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, London, 1921, p. 249, Waite speculated on the Eleusinian Mysteries: 'It is again therefore an exile and return formula – the figurative death of material life, a resurrection into the life of the spirit, a coming down into the exile of this world and a liberation therefrom'.

[42.](#) Zalewski 1991, p. 172.

[43.](#) Waite 1911, p. 151.

[44.](#) Waite 1910, p. 130; Waite 1972, p. 114; Waite 1911, p. 224.

Notes to Chapter 9

[1.](#) See Howe 1972a, p. 258.

[2.](#) In 1902 Westcott, as Supreme Magus of the Soc. Ros., had given Reuss permission to found a Societas Rosicruciana in Germania, which does not appear ever to have come into existence.

- [3.](#) Gilbert 1983a, p. 72.
- [4.](#) Gilbert 1997, pp. 173-4.
- [5.](#) King 1989, p. 96.
- [6.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 120, correctly gives the date of Blackden's marriage as 1909, although Gilbert 1983a, p. 70, mistakenly gives it as 1904.
- [7.](#) Gilbert 1987a, p. 122; but Gilbert 1997, p. 183, assigns the initiative in dissolving the Concordat to Waite.
- [8.](#) See Gilbert 1983, p. 73.
- [9.](#) King 1989, p. 100.
- [10.](#) King 1989, p. 106, and Howe 1972a, p. 267.
- [11.](#) Gilbert 1986, p. 38.
- [12.](#) See Gilbert 1997, pp. 164-5, and Gilbert 1986, pp. 40-1.
- [13.](#) Colquhoun 1975, p. 148, erroneously gives the date as 1923.
- [14.](#) From the sketch of a poem entitled 'For Initiation of $7 = 4$ ', written in 1915, it seems possible that he was advanced to Adeptus Exemptus $7^0 = 4^0$ in the following year – the same grade as Westcott and Mathers; see Ellmann 1979, p. 259.
- [15.](#) Some confusion exists on this point. Gilbert 1986, p. 169, gives W.B. Yeats as Imperator in 1914, and Howe 1972a, p. 283, assigns him the same office in 1922, shortly before he left the Order. Gilbert 1983a, p. 76, on the other hand, describes Miss Stoddart as Imperatrix after Felkin's departure for New Zealand, and says that the Reverend A.H.E. Lee preceded her as Imperator. King 1989, p. 107, implies that Felkin was Imperator until his departure, then retaining only the position of Chief.
- [16.](#) King 1989, p. 127.
- [17.](#) Though not with Berridge's widow, who, Moina wrote, 'hates me to such an extent, that I have not even sent her a letter of condolence': see Greer 1995, p. 349.
- [18.](#) Fortune 1933, p. 20. The remark related to widows of occultists in general, but she must have had Mrs Mathers in mind.
- [19.](#) Regardie 1983, pp. 33-5. Regardie states that Moina Mathers licensed an American Temple to conduct a correspondence course, leading to an initiation by post for a fee of \$10; but the information should be treated with caution.
- [20.](#) Harper 1974, p. 139.
- [21.](#) Quoted by Howe 1972a, p. 283.
- [22.](#) Gilbert 1986, p. 41, reports that the Amoun Temple was revived, 'subsequently' to 1920, by Carnegie Dixon and the Reverend A.H.E. Lee, but declines to give any details.
- [23.](#) According to Gilbert 1983, p. 79, the Hermes Temple in Bristol survived until 1972; in Gilbert 1986, p. 42, its existence is more cautiously stated to have extended to 'the late 1960s'.
- [24.](#) Colquhoun 1977, p. 194.
- [25.](#) See King 1989, p. 119.
- [26.](#) Crowley 1970, pp. 709-10.
- [27.](#) This dating is given in Michaelson 1989, p. 268, which notes the anachronism of Reuss's alleged objections raised in 1912. Probably Crowley contrived lies to surround his *Book of Lies*.
- [28.](#) Gerald del Campo, *New Aeon Magic: Thelema without Tears*, St Paul, Minnesota, 1994, pp. 62-3.
- [29.](#) King 1989, p. 122n., credits him with having attained only the VI^0 degree by 1912.
- [30.](#) See King 1972, p. 90.
- [31.](#) Cf. Richard Cavendish, *A History of Magic*, London, 1977, New York, 1979, p. 149. Crowley distinguished between the higher genius and the higher self. He denied that the guardian angel can be an aspect of oneself. Cf. Israel Regardie, *The Eye in the Triangle*, Phoenix, Arizona, 1970, p. 509 (quoting Crowley's *Magic without Tears*).

[32.](#) Under the title *Liber L vel Legis sub figura CCXX*, as delivered by LXXVIII unto DCLXVI, the book was printed in *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. X, October 1913, pp. 9-33. A very small facsimile of the original manuscript, under the same title, had appeared on a fold-out sheet opposite p. 386 of *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. VII, March 1912; it is impossible to read without a magnifying glass and difficult to read with one. According to Grady Louis McMurtry, in Crowley 1983, the book had first been published, as *Liber CCXX*, in Vol. 3 of *Thelema*, a three-volume work privately printed in 1909. Presumably this was circulated only among members of the A.A., who thus saw the book three or four years before anyone else did.

[33.](#) The image of the circle (or sphere) and its centre is a commonplace among Neoplatonic mystics. See D. Mahnke, *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt: Beiträge zur Genealogie der mathematischen Mystik* 8, Halle, 1937, and Karstin Harries, 'The Infinite Sphere', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 13, 1975, pp. 5-15.

[34.](#) See Colquhoun 1975, p. 204, and King 1989, p. 125.

[35.](#) Crowley 1975, Introduction.

[36.](#) Crowley 1970, p. 593.

[37.](#) Symonds 1973, pp. 236-7, 297-8.

[38.](#) Wilson 1987, pp. 112-16, lists some of Crowley's victims, Leah Hirsig among them.

[39.](#) Crowley's editors mistakenly give 'Evans' for Adams. See Crowley 1973, p. 8.

[40.](#) See Louis MacNeice, *Astrology*, London, 1964, p. 196, and Charles Neilson Gattey, *Visionaries and Seers*, Bridport, Dorset, 1988, pp. 262-3.

[41.](#) Crowley 1970, p. 762.

[42.](#) Crowley 1974, p. 9.

[43.](#) Colquhoun 1975, p. 147; Regardie 1970, pp. 113ff.

[44.](#) See King 1989, pp. 125-6.

[45.](#) Alan Burnett-Rae, *A Memoir of 666*, quoted in full by Sandy Robertson, *The Aleister Crowley Scrapbook*, York Beach, Maine, 1988, p. 23-7.

[46.](#) Wilson 1987, p. 145.

[47.](#) According to Suster 1987, p. 77, Atatürk's mother was Patricia MacAlpine. Symonds 1989, p. 494, referring to Crowley's diary, calls the woman Deirdre.

[48.](#) Symonds 1951. Symonds also wrote *The Magic of Aleister Crowley* (London, 1958) and combined it with a revised biography to form later editions of *The Great Beast* (London, 1971, 1973). These titles are now superseded by Symonds 1989.

[49.](#) Crowley tried to disguise this obvious derivation by repudiating the converse one, which no one had suggested, saying that 'some etymologists of a singularly idle disposition' had tried to derive the French word *atout* from the word ATU meaning 'House' (Crowley 1944, p. 37).

[50.](#) Crowley 1944, p. 6.

[51.](#) Crowley 1944, p. 339.

[52.](#) Her name is invariably given incorrectly as Lady Frieda Harris in American publications and sometimes in British ones. She was the wife of a baronet, not the daughter of a peer.

[53.](#) Colquhoun 1975, p. 251.

[54.](#) Crowley 1944, pp. 9, 39; Crowley 1983, p. 112, and Michaelson 1989, p. 211.

[55.](#) The illogicality of Crowley's trump order is briefly noted by Rachel Pollack, *The New Tarot*, Woodstock, New York, 1990, pp. 146-7. She shows how the problem is exacerbated in the *Magickal Tarot* by Anthony Clark.

[56.](#) Aleister Crowley, 'A Description of the Cards of the Tarot', *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. VIII, September 1912, (reprinted as a booklet under the title *Tarot Divination*, New York, 1976).

[57.](#) One admirer of Crowley's Tarot, Gerd Ziegler, *Tarot, Mirror of the Soul: Handbook for the Aleister Crowley Tarot*, York Beach, Maine, 1986, p. 3, estimates that its symbols are twelve hundred in number.

[58](#). Crowley credited this to J.W.N. Sullivan, an acquaintance of his and a writer on science but not a scientist. The periodic table of elements, as Crowley uses it in his World trump, was the work of the Danish physicist Julius Thomsen (1826-1909).

[59](#). In Crowley 1974, pp. 53-61.

[60](#). Crowley, probably borrowing from Lévi and Wirth, planned that the Emperor's posture – folded arms and crossed legs – should imply a triangle over a cross, an alchemical glyph for sulphur, which Crowley says is sublimated fire. In the final design, Crowley borrowed the ram-headed throne from Waite.

[61](#). Crowley, in his manuscript, writes that at the feet of the Pope should kneel four persons, posed so that all the heads together imply the points of a pentagram. As the card finally evolved, the pentagram (now circumscribing a human figure) is superimposed upon the Pope's chest.

[62](#). Crowley always ignored the Golden Dawn's peculiar version (Perseus rescuing Andromeda).

[63](#). Because the sun 'enters Cancer at the summer solstice, that is at the period of his greatest triumph'.

[64](#). The spelling derives from Crowley's use of the Enochian language revealed to Edward Kelley and recorded by John Dee. For the Enochian term '*babalon*' in a typeset version of Dee's MS, consult Robert Turner, *Elizabethan Magic*, Shaftesbury, 1989, pp. 36, 46.

[65](#). Temperance holds a cup in her right hand and a torch in her left; the torch endures in the B.O.T.A. Tarot.

[66](#). In his *Confessions*, Crowley makes a great show of his expertise in astrology (Crowley 1970, pp. 762-5). But when he met a famous astrologer, Rupert Gleadow, he remarked that, in his opinion, there was less than 1% truth in astrology (Wilson 1987, p. 151). He thus may have been ambivalent about the validity of the astrology of which he made use.

[67](#). See Regardie 1978, p. 185.

[68](#). See Zalewski 1991, p. 159.

Notes to Chapter 10

[1](#). Stenring 1923, p. 11.

[2](#). Stenring 1923, p. 13.

[3](#). A.E. Waite, 'The Great Symbols of the Tarot', *Occult Review*, Vol. 43, June 1926, pp. 11-19, at p. 19.

[4](#). Stenring 1923, pp. 15-16.

[5](#). We have seen a photocopy of this thanks to the kindness of Mr R.A. Gilbert.

[6](#). Compare fig. 5 in [Chapter 0](#).

[7](#). Trinick drew the portrait of Waite in his robes as Imperator of the F.R.C., which was used as the frontispiece to Waite's *New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, London, 1921; but he was also a stained-glass artist. He was born in Melbourne in 1890, and died in England in 1974. He published a book of poetry, a study of St Gregory of Nyssa and *The Fire-Tried Stone*, Marazion & London, 1967, but nothing on the Tarot. He joined the F.R.C. on 27 March 1919, having made his profession on 3 December 1916. Pippet was not a member of the F.R.C, and nothing is known about him. We have seen the plates through the great kindness of Mr R.A. Gilbert.

[8](#). The instruction given in the ceremony for admission to the 6-5 grade in Waite's Independent and Rectified Rite contains the words 'in this Grade you are invited to regard it [the 12th Key of the Tarot] after a new manner ... Mem, through the sacrifice of Christ, has analogy with the legend of the dead Osiris, one of whose appellations was the shipwrecked or drowned Mariner, even as this terrible Key, which you see now in its true form, represents a drowned giant ... the mystical Ark of Noah ... is the body of man ... poised on the waters of the world'. See I. Regardie, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*, Phoenix, Arizona, 1984, Vol. VII, pp. 140-1. Regardie mistakenly assigned the ritual to the later Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. The

entire passage is quoted from Regardie on pp. 146-9 of Nicolas Tereshchenko's 'Arcanum XXIII: the Drowned Sleeping Titan' in M.K. Greer and R. Pollack (eds.), *New Thoughts on Tarot*, North Hollywood, 1989, pp. 140-55.

9. Some details of C.S. Jones's life can be gathered from Wasserman 1993. This contains a brief biography of him by Wasserman (pp. xiv-xvi) and a reprint (pp. 107-55) of 'Liber CLXV: A Master of the Temple', a magical diary by Frater Achad running from 1909 to 1913, with notes by A. Crowley. On Achad's note 'Had to leave off, as was called to tea by Ruby', Crowley comments, 'a virtuous woman is above Rubies, and never calls holy men to tea' (p. 139). The diary is reprinted from *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. 1, Detroit, 1919, itself reprinted 1992 by Weiser Publishing, York Beach, Maine, and is included in A. Crowley, *Gems from the Equinox*, Phoenix, Arizona, 1988.

10. See Hymenaeus Beta Xo, Prolegomenon to Crowley 1991, p. xx, and idem (ed.), *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. 10, 1986, repr. York Beach, Maine, 1990, p. 215. King 1972, p. 129, credits Jones with having introduced the sexual magic of the O.T.O. into North America, and with having opened branches of the Order in Los Angeles and possibly Washington, D.C.; we have no confirmation of these statements from any other source.

11. According to Richard Cavendish, *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic and Folk Belief*, London and New York, 1975, 1993, p. 277, Fuller wrote an unpublished MS, *The Hidden Wisdom of the Illuminati*, in 1926.

12. Suster 1987, p. 211; Suster 1990, pp. 84-5; Wassermann 1993; p. xv, Crowley 1991, p. xvi.

13. Published in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. I, pp. 171-82 as *Liber CCC: Khebs Am Pekht*.

14. Crowley 1991, pp. xxi, xxv, xxvi. Achad later wrote, 'I spent many years as an Accountant, which work I did without it being particularly congenial to me. I found it became possible for me to make a living in more congenial ways, so that I became happier, if not so well off financially, than I had been' (*The Egyptian Revival*, 1923, p. 104).

15. It is to be hoped in the company of his wife and child.

16. Crowley 1991, p. xxi.

17. We are also told that 'AL' means 'God' in Hebrew: see Aleister Crowley, 'On Certain Technical Difficulties Connected with the Literary Form of the Book [*Liber AL*]', reprinted in Michaelson 1989, p. 231.

18. Included in *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. I (repr. Samuel Weiser, New York, 1972) are some books bearing the imprimatur of the A.A.; see pp. 46 and 54. Under the seal of the A.A. are given the numbers of three members of the Collegium Summum (Supreme Council), the order mottoes of four members of the Collegium Internum (Inner Council), among them Parzival 50 = 60, and those of three members of the Collegium Externum (Outer Council), including Achad as Cancellarius.

19. Wasserman 1993, p. xv, Crowley 1991, p. xxv. He was now entitled to sign himself 'Parzival X⁰': 'there was a tenth degree [in the O.T.O.], but this was ... a title given to the head of each section of the Order' (King 1972, p. 90).

20. Stephen Skinner (ed.), *The Magical Diaries of Aleister Crowley*, Jersey and New York, 1979, p. 127; see Crowley 1991, p. xxiv, n. 32. Crowley criticised Achad's theory in print in Crowley 1929, p. 7n.

21. Here Achad approached the idea of 'the Age of Aquarius', a period of universal brotherhood already current in the New Thought movement by 1915 and eagerly proclaimed by the counter-culture in the 1960s. Crowley 1991, p. xvii, explains the distinction between Ages and Aeons. Astrological Ages depend upon the ... precession of the equinoxes ... ; the zodiacal sign on the horizon at dawn on the spring equinox changes ... every 2,156 years. These Ages are not necessarily coterminous with Aeons, which may vary in length. But while the inauguration of the Age of Aquarius coincided with the inception of the Aeon of Horus, their relationship is not

immediately obvious.' For Gerald Suster, the motto of the Aeon of Horus should in effect be 'Make Love *and* War': to attain the next Aeon, he says, 'we will have to fight for it and fuck for it ... We must liberate ourselves from ... tyranny by fighting, then come closer to one another by fucking' (Suster 1990, p. 86).

[22.](#) Suster 1987, p. 211, Suster 1990, p. 86 and Francis King and Isabel Sutherland, *The Rebirth of Magic*, London, 1982, pp. 176-7. The last of these books adds that a spell in hospital (presumably a mental hospital) followed. A ridiculous anecdote of Achad's ineffectually reciting Crowley's poetry to his broken-down Ford is given in King 1972, p. 129, n. 4. None of these sources gives any indication of the dates at which these events are supposed to have occurred.

[23.](#) 'The Essence of the Practical Qabalah', *Occult Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, July 1923, pp. 28-33, and 'Belief versus Knowledge', *ibid.*, Vol. XXXIX, February 1924, pp. 94-101. The second of these is suffused with Hindu ideas.

[24.](#) The books were found by the storage firm long after Crowley and Achad had both died; see Crowley 1991, p. xxvi.

[25.](#) Wasserman 1993, p. xv, Crowley 1991, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

[26.](#) Crowley 1991, p. xxvii.

[27.](#) Crowley 1991, pp. xvii and xxvii.

[28.](#) Crowley 1991, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

[29.](#) Crowley 1991, p. xxviii. Achad still appears as Cancellarius of the A.A. in the imprimatur printed in *The Equinox of the Gods* (*The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. III), of September 1936; but this may have been printed before the expulsion.

[30.](#) Howe 1972a, p. 284.

[31.](#) Suster 1987, p. 76.

[32.](#) Grant 1976, p. 151; Suster 1987, p. 212. The proclamation was made at 1.11 p.m., presumably the time of his birth either by Pacific Standard Time or by Greenwich Mean Time.

[33.](#) Crowley 1991, p. xxx.

[34.](#) See King 1989, pp. 166-7, Grant 1976, p. 154, and Colquhoun 1975, p. 206, which dates the foundation of the Fellowship as early as 1923.

[35.](#) Suster 1989, p. 1; the book is a biography of Regardie.

[36.](#) Quoted by Suster 1989, p. 38.

[37.](#) Crowley had lifted his life savings of \$1200 off him when he first arrived in Paris, but supported him during his stay in Brussels.

[38.](#) Suster 1989, p. 67, says explicitly that he joined 'the ... Hermes Temple in Bristol', though he had certainly been living in London. See note 53.

[39.](#) See Regardie 1983, pp. 50-5, 102-8.

[40.](#) 6th edn, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1989.

[41.](#) King 1989, p. 155.

[42.](#) Robert Wang wrote an accompanying book, *An Introduction to the Golden Dawn Tarot*, New York, 1978, 1979, Wellingborough, 1979, with illustrations of all the cards.

[43.](#) Both German branches of the O.T.O. were suppressed by the Nazis in 1933. Karl Germer had been head of Crowley's branch in the United States, but died in 1962 without naming a successor. McMurtry's claim was disputed by the Brazilian Marcelo Ramos Motta, but, after McMurtry's death in 1985, his group was recognised by a US Federal court as rightful claimant to the name of the O.T.O.

[44.](#) It, too, was accompanied by a book, by Chic Cicero and Sandra Tabatha Cicero, *The New Golden Dawn Ritual Tarot*, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1991, again with illustrations of all the cards.

[45.](#) Runyon 1997, p. 9. There are now some eighteen Orders or Temples in the United States, England and France claiming descent from the original Order of the Golden Dawn, or using its name. Of these, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in Elfers, Florida, the Hermetic Temple and Order of the Golden Dawn in Phoenix, Arizona, the Hermetic Temple and Order of the

Golden Dawn in Baldwin Park, California, the Invisible Temple no. 0, Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis, in various locations, and the Ordo Rosae Rubrae et Aureae Crucis in Beverly Hills, California, are offshoots of Israel Regardie's refoundation of the Golden Dawn. Some of them are affiliated to the Israel Regardie Foundation, whose President is Christopher Hyatt (secular name Alan Miller).

[46.](#) T.M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989, p. 56.

[47.](#) Information about the life of Dion Fortune can be extracted, painfully, from Richardson 1987.

[48.](#) Others were Osiris, Krishna, etc.

[49.](#) See Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4 (Vulgate 109:4) and Hebrews 5:6-10 and 7:1-17.

[50.](#) Not known to have been related to Crowley's short-lived disciple, Frederick Charles ('Raoul') Loveday (1900-1923).

[51.](#) See Richardson 1987, pp. 134-40.

[52.](#) See Fortune 1933, pp. 22-3.

[53.](#) Richardson 1987, p. 114, Gilbert 1983a, p. 78. Colquhoun 1975, p. 194, explains that there were several members of the Hermes Temple who lived, not in Bristol, but in London or elsewhere.

[54.](#) See Fortune 1930, pp. 155-9, 1988 edn pp. 150-4. See also Cavendish 1977, p. 157; King 1989, pp. 143-9; and Colquhoun 1975, pp. 58-9. The reference to Fortune 1930 on p. 23 of Fortune 1933 makes it quite clear that Moina Mathers was intended: 'My experiences, when I persisted in using the Order system, I have related in *Psychic Self-Defence*. Unpleasant as those experiences were, the fact remains that Mrs Mathers's rejection of me did not close the gates of the Order to me on either the outer or the inner planes.'

[55.](#) Fortune 1930, pp. 102-3; 1988 edn, pp. 98-9.

[56.](#) Fortune 1933.

[57.](#) Crowley 1929.

[58.](#) This is a little hard to reconcile with such statements as 'The knowledge guarded by the secret fraternities is too potent to be given out indiscriminately' (Fortune 1929, p. 112; Fortune 1987, p. 73).

[59.](#) Fortune 1987, pp. 63-4.

Notes to Chapter 11

[1.](#) For a bibliography of Wirth's writings, see Baylot 1975, pp. 229-33. Our biography of Wirth is greatly indebted to Baylot.

[2.](#) Baylot 1975, p. 71n.

[3.](#) Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 237, gives the first members as Paul Adam, François-Charles Barlet (Albert Faucheux), Marc Haven (Emmanuel Lalande), Papus (Gérard Encausse), Joséphin Peladan (styled Sâr Péladan after 1890) and the abbé Alta (the abbé C. Mélinge). Baylot 1975, p. 43, does not list P. Adam or M. Haven, but adds Oswald Wirth and Auguste Chaboseau, a student of Buddhism. Baylot says that de Guaita wanted his Order to have a governing body of twelve, but the remainder were probably never invited: no names are known for them. According to James Webb (Richard Cavendish, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Unexplained*, London, 1974, p. 216), the Order was to have twelve officers, six visible and six invisible. The former were de Guaita, Péladan, Papus, Adam, Barlet and Alta. The invisible members did not exist.

[4.](#) Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 24, erroneously gives the pack's publisher as 'E. Poirot'. 'Poirot' was our mistake; the 'E' comes from A.P. Morton's English translation of Papus' *Le Tarot des Bohémiens*. According to Baylot 1975, the pack's publisher was Georges Poiré.

[5.](#) The pack is named here as in Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 238; the same is given in S. Kaplan 1986, p. 391, and Thierry Depaulis, *Tarot, Jeu et Magie*, Paris, 1984, p. 139. Wirth's *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge* has a list of the author's previous works, including 'Les 22

Arcanes du Tarot Kabbalistique'. These sources controvert another purported title: *Le Livre de Thot* (see Howe 1972a, p. 29 fn1, and the entry for item 2000 in *Bibliotheca Esoterica*, Paris, n.d. [1940], the catalogue issued by the bookseller Dorbon Aîné). A few copies exist in private collections. One is in the Bibliothèque Nationale. S. Kaplan 1986 (p. 393) shows 20 cards, presumably from a complete pack of 22, in the Aleister Crowley Collection (University of Austin). Crowley has painted over Wirth's numbers and letters, doubtless because the latter defied Crowley's preferences, which largely conformed to the Golden Dawn attributions.

6. The reference to Mercury preserves Lévi's early thinking about astrological attributions for the Hebrew letters and the corresponding trumps, as implied in his *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, Paris, 1856. He built upon Kircher's list (see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 16). It gives two places to each letter that has both a regular form and a 'final' form. Lévi consequently linked some of those letters with two planets each. The full planetary system (which Lévi never made explicit) would be as follows.

<i>Lamed</i>	<i>Mem</i>	<i>Mem final</i>	<i>Nun</i>	<i>Nun final</i>	<i>Samekh</i>	<i>Ayin</i>
Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Sun	Venus	Mercury	Moon
Hanged Man	Death	Death	Temperance	Temperance	Devil	Tower

Lévi seems to have abandoned this scheme for another, that publicised by Papus. Papus and Wirth, probably inadvertently, preserved elements of the abandoned scheme.

7. This seems plausible, given his sister's reference to him as 'the Sage of the ninth Arcanum' (see note 22 below). Wirth was bearded and carried a cane.

8. The Tarot de Marseille is omitted from some paperback reprints (e.g., Hollywood, 1970).

9. The translation is from Papus, *The Tarot of the Bohemians*, A.P. Morton (trans.), London, 1892, p. 246.

10. See Richard Hinckley Allen, *Star-Names and Their Meanings*, New York, 1899, p. 450.

11. Baylot 1975, p. 95 (letter to Marius Lepage: Lepage Collection, No. 29). The discord between Wirth and Papus perhaps explains the omission of Wirth's drawings and essay when Papus reissued his *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* in 1911.

12. Papus cites the excerpt as appearing in the periodical *Lotus*, March 1880, pp. 327-8. De Guaita planned a series of books to be called *Essais des sciences maudites* (*Essays in the Forbidden Sciences*). The first title was *Au seuil du mystère* (*On the Threshold of the Mystery*, Paris 1886). In 1888, he announced the second title, *Le Serpent de la Genèse* (*The Serpent of Genesis*). It grew to occupy three volumes: *Le Temple de Satan* (*The Temple of Satan*, Paris, 1891), *La Clef de la magie noire* (*The Key to Black Magic*, Paris 1897) and *Le Problème du mal* (*The Problem of Evil*, Levallois-Perret, 1949). The last book appeared posthumously under the joint authorship of Stanislas de Guaita and Oswald Wirth.

13. Wirth's series, 'Les Arcanes du Tarot', appeared in a periodical, *La Lumière maçonnique*, with trumps discussed separately in successive issues, which appeared monthly, or nearly so. We have not seen the entire series, which is very scarce. We are extremely grateful to Thierry Depaulis for helping us to obtain photographs of Wirth's plates illustrating the Arcana.

14. This is a translation and analysis of *Das Märchen* (*Fairytale*) by Goethe (1749-1832).

15. For a detailed explanation of the ideograms, see Oswald Wirth, *Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge*, Paris, 1927, pp. 228-36.

16. Cards 0, 12 and 19 have inscriptions on plinths that extend beyond the frame lines around the images, and the lettering is Roman; the figures are partly 'toned' with black dots. Card 2 has the same kind of tone, but the lettering is Gothic and fits in a zone exactly as wide as that between the vertical frame lines. This card has one border with 'ideograms', but differing from its 1926 counterpart. Card 14 has the smallest zone for its inscription, which is lettered in Renaissance majuscules, quite like those in the 1926 designs; the figure has no dotted tone.

[17.](#) Wirth happened to agree with Lévi about the Sun card: it corresponds to Gemini, the Twins. They can be construed as Castor and Pollux, and Wirth wanted the card to include their attribute, a lyre. Wirth says that he regrets its absence from the card, but in fact his drawing includes the lyre after all. In the book's Introduction, he says that the first manuscript version was lost, and he had to rewrite the whole thing. Perhaps this accounts for some of the book's disparities.

[18.](#) The references are to the engraved 'Tarocchi di Mantegna' and the illuminated 'Tarot of Charles VI'. Both are misnamed, but still have not been securely attributed to artists or patrons.

[19.](#) *Catalogue méthodique de la Bibliothèque du Ministère des Colonies*, 1926, cote Bibliothèque Nationale 9.3202, cited in Baylot 1975, p. 231.

[20.](#) Diogène Gondeau [Oswald Wirth], 'La crédulité occultiste', *Le Symbolisme*, 1930, p. 161, cited in Baylot 1975, p. 114.

[21.](#) The English translation is *Introduction to the Study of the Tarot*, foreword by Stuart R. Kaplan, York Beach, Maine, 1983. The text's illustrations are reprinted from those in the 1966 Tchou edition.

[22.](#) Quoted in Baylot 1975, p. 124: 'Votre vieux Maître nous a quitté mardi 9 mars à 11 heures, doucement, sans une crispation, comme il sied au Sage de l'Arcane IX.'

[23.](#) One copy (in the collection of K. Frank Jensen) is of monochrome linework (see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 547); the other (in the Nationaal Museum van de Speelkaart, Turnhout, Belgium) has watercolour painted within the linework. Jensen suggests a date in the 1950s; S. Kaplan gives 'circa 1900-1920'.

[24.](#) See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 198-9.

[25.](#) Photocopies of Alexander's Tarot were kindly provided to us by Frank Jensen. Also, he has alerted us to a more faithful reproduction of Wirth's 1926 designs, complete with the original borders, as a pack of 22 cards made by Éditions de l'Aigle, Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada.

[26.](#) See note 34.

[27.](#) Christina Olsen, *The Art of Tarot*, New York, 1995, p. 184, says that this Tarot dates from 1926 and was rendered in oils. But it appeared only in 1966, and the artist more probably used pen and ink, not brushes and paint. His name was Michel Siméon, according to Franz Braun, *Playing Cards before 1850*, Köln, 1970, item 1482.

[28.](#) Other affronts to Wirth's intentions are: changes in colour composition, the complete elimination of Wirth's monogram and the distortion of COAGULA – appearing as COA6 ULA – in Arcanum XV.

[29.](#) This pack, which appeared in 1976, is erroneously labelled as the 'original' Oswald Wirth Tarot Deck. Accompanying the trumps, which come from the pack in the 1966 Tchou edition, are the four common suits, newly drawn but similar to those of the Tarot de Marseille. The court cards are rendered in the pseudo-woodcut style, but are drawn with even less competence than were the trumps. This 78-card Tarot is printed by AG Müller and distributed by US Games Systems.

[30.](#) *The Tarot of the Magicians*, York Beach, Maine, 1989. The publisher's note reads 'First published in Paris in 1927 under the original title: *Le Tarot, des Imagiers du Moyen Age*.' However, the text's illustrations are reprinted from those in the 1966 Tchou edition.

[31.](#) The data here come from Van Rijnberk 1947, opposite p. 202.

[32.](#) A French edition is *Sagesse du Tarot*, Paris & Lausanne, 1972. A British edition is *The Wisdom of the Tarot* by D.Q. Stephenson (trans.), London, 1975, which was reprinted in America (Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1984). An Israeli edition (1989) has Hebrew text and Hebrew captions for the cards. Frank Jensen kindly informed us about this edition.

[33.](#) In the game of Tarot, save in France, the Ace traditionally ranked lowest in the suits of Swords and Batons, and fifth highest, after the four court cards, in the suits of Cups and Coins; in France it ranked lowest in all four suits.

34. The translated texts (see note 32) have cards with various peculiarities. The French edition (1972) has a sleeve containing 22 trumps redrawn from Wirth's 1926 Planches, and therefore have the fancy borders with ideograms. The new printers appear to have been Drei Eichen Verlag, Munich. (S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 545-6, says that such a pack, from the same press, was issued circa 1986. S. Kaplan does not say whether this pack accompanied a book.) The British edition (1975) appears to use the pack by Georg Alexander, who omitted the fancy borders by Wirth. The American edition (1984) has only plates, not a pack as such. They too depend on Alexander's drawings, except for card 17, LES ETOILES, which has regained Wirth's border from 1926. The Israeli edition (1989) has trumps as illustrations and as a pack accompanying the book; the drawings are exactly as in the American edition, including the border for LES ETOILES, but all cards have been reduced in size.

Notes to Chapter 12

1. In an anonymous article entitled 'Ueber den Ursprung und die Bedeutung der Tarock-Charthen' ('On the Origin and Significance of Tarot Cards') in the *Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur* for 1782, pp. 348-77.

2. The translation was anonymous, but is very likely to have been the work of Hisler. It bore the sonorous title *Theoretischer und praktischer Unterricht über das Buch Thot, oder über die höhere Kraft, Natur und Mensch, mit Zuverlässigkeit die Geheimnisse des Lebens zu enthüllen, und Orakel zu ertheilen nach die Egyptier wunderbarer Kunst* (*Theoretical and Practical Instruction on the Book of Thoth, or on Nature, Man and the Higher Power Reliably to Unveil the Secrets of Life and to Impart Oracles according to the Wonderful Art of the Egyptians*). For Hisler, see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 100.

3. The reprint was issued by Johann Scheible, under the title *Theoretischer und praktischer Unterricht über das Buch Thot*, Stuttgart, 1857, as part 14 of his occult series *Kleiner Wunder Schauplatz der geheimen Wissenschaften* (*Wonderful Little Theatre of the Occult Sciences*). See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 113.

4. English translation *The Golem* by Madge Pemberton, London, 1928.

5. For illustrations of Kurtzahn's cards, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 161. We are grateful to Frau Karin Arnold, of the Deutsches Spielkarten-Museum at Leinfelden, for sending us a photocopy of the second edition of Kurtzahn's book.

6. The book was reprinted by Avalun-Verlag, Büdigen Gettenbach, in 1957. We are deeply grateful to Frau Arnold for sending us a photocopy of this reprint.

7. For illustrations, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 549. Kaplan wrongly gives Uxkull's name as Uxkrie.

8. For illustrations see Hoffmann & Dietrich 1988, p. 147, and S. Kaplan 1978, p. 220. Kaplan's note is garbled: Richard Schikowski was Winckelmann's publisher, and 1962 is the date of the third edition of his book.

9. C.C. Zain, *The Sacred Tarot*, Los Angeles, 1936, 1969, p. 69.

10. A third edition was issued in Freiburg-im-Breisgau in 1959. We are deeply grateful to Frau Arnold for sending us a photocopy of the first edition.

11. The printer of the book and the cards was Otto Wessel of Lübeck.

12. For illustrations, see Hoffmann & Kroppenstedt 1972, p. 153, Hoffmann & Dietrich 1988, p. 150, and S. Kaplan 1990, p. 171. According to the latter, the pack was reprinted in about 1976.

13. Using the standard numeration of the *sephiroth* and the notation 1-2 for the path between Kether (1) and Chokmah (2) and so forth, and using Roman instead of Arabic numerals for Glahn's numeration of the paths, we may summarise his scheme thus: 1-2 I, 1-3 II; 1-6-9 III, 2-3 IV, 2-6 V, 2-4 VI, 3-6 VII, 3-5 VIII, 4-5 IX, 4-6 X, 4-7 XI, 5~6 XII, 5-8 XIII, 6-7 XIV, 7-8 XVII

(right-hand half) and XV (left-hand half), 6-8 XVI, 7-9 XVIII, 7-10 XIX, 8-9 XX, 8-10 XXI and 9-10 XXII (presumably corresponding to the Fool as major Arcanum 0).

Notes to Chapter 13

1. Sadhu 1963, p. 206, and Hoeller 1994, p. 17-8.
2. Our knowledge of Mebes has been greatly improved by personal correspondence with Dr Rafal Prinke. Shmakov 1916, pp. 56-7, gives Mebes' Christian names as 'Gregory Ottonovich'. Sadhu 1962, p. 13, and S. Kaplan 1986, pp. 515, 523, give 'Gregory Ossipowitch'. Sadhu 1965, p. 17, incorrectly gives Mebes's date of death as 1918. Sadhu further says that Mebes served as the model for a magician in a story by the Russian novelist Kuprin.
3. Sadhu 1962, p. 271.
4. It is not clear whether this confusion or experimentation was present in Mebes' own book, which we have not seen.
5. Shmakov 1916, p. 56.
6. The complete references (for which Shmakov neglects some data) are: Iwan Gilkin, *Stances dorées. Commentaire sacerdotal du Tarot* (*Golden Stanzas, Sacred Commentary on the Tarot*, Paris and Brussels, 1893), Jean-Gaston Bourgeat, *Le Tarot* (*The Tarot*, Paris, [1906] reprint 1913), Julia Orsini's *Le Grand Etteilla ou l'art de tirer les cartes* (*Grand Etteilla or the Art of Reading Cards*, Lille, 1838) and Papus [1889] revised 1911.
7. Shmakov 1916, p. 57.
8. For Mebes' political and occult career, Rafal Prinke refers to Ludwik Hass, *Loza i polityka: Mazoneria rosyjska 1822-1995* (*The Lodge and Politics: Russian Masonry 1822-1995*, Warsaw, 1998) and Viktor Bratchiev, 'Tayniye masonskiye obshchestva v SSSR (Secret Masonic Societies in the USSR)', *Molodaya Gvardiya*, No. 3 (1994).
9. We have not seen the book, only the excerpts in S. Kaplan 1990, p. 308. Édouard Schuré (1841-1929) was the author of *Les Grands initiés* (*The Great Initiates*, Paris, 1889). The initiate again encounters the 22 sacred 'Mysteries', wall paintings that are labelled by letter and number. A Magus explains that all the symbols can be interpreted on three levels (divine, intellectual and physical). The first Arcanum is said to depict a Magus, while the last Arcanum is the Crown of the Magi. The initiate, when allowed to rest, is troubled by visions of Arcanum X (the Wheel of Fortune).
10. For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 311.
11. Goulinat's Tarot could have been known through his illustrations in Papus's *Le Tarot Divinatoire* (1909) or in Papus' revision of *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (1911). A Russian publisher also issued Goulinat's Tarot, with Russian inscriptions, in 1925 (see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 418-9).
12. This work is called *The Wheel of Fortune* in Ouspensky 1931, p. 435, and Wilson 1993, p. 14. Bibliographers call the story *Kinemadrama* (*Screenplay*). They have assumed that it was intended for a film, but the title, if Ouspensky used it at all, may have been as allegorical as the text. A film projection would be an apt symbol for the endless repetition of the illusions of mundane life. The story is presumed to be partially autobiographical. Published in Russian in 1915, it was translated as a novel, *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin* (London, 1947).
13. Although 1910 appears on the first edition, Henderson 1983, p. 247, says that 1909 appears in *Knizhnaia letopis'*, the Russian directory of publications.
14. Ouspensky 1931, p. 86. For a complete survey of Ouspensky's ideas about the fourth dimension, see Henderson 1983, pp. 245-55.
15. Although 1912 is usually given as the publication date, Henderson 1983, p. 247, says that 1911 appears in *Knizhnaia letopis'*.
16. Ouspensky borrowed this term from Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, Philadelphia, 1901.
17. Sadhu 1963, p. 213.

18. In our synopsis, we use unifying concepts that Ouspensky only implies in *The Symbolism of the Tarot*. However, the key terms are largely explicit in his later book, *A New Model of the Universe*. For the changes in the later work, see note 28.

19. For his ideas on reincarnation, as a corollary to Eternal Recurrence, see P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, New York, 1957, pp. 413-37. For his idea of 'reincarnation' into the past, see Ouspensky 1931, pp. 431-9.

20. Webb 1987, p. 210.

21. According to Merrily E. Taylor, *Remembering Pyotr Demianovich Ouspensky*, New Haven, 1978, p. 19, the English translation was never approved by Ouspensky. It has been reprinted and distributed widely: Santa Fe, 1975; New York, 1976; Marrickville, New South Wales, 1985; and Van Nuys, California, 1995.

22. For Gurdjieff's unacknowledged sources, see Robin Amis, 'Mouravieff and the Secret of the Source', *Gnosis*, No. 20, summer 1991, pp. 46-51.

23. Webb 1987, p. 139.

24. Hoeller 1994, p. 18.

25. See Bragdon's booklets: *Man the Square: a Higher Space Parable* (1912), *A Primer of Higher Space* (1913) and *Projective Ornament* (1915). His *Four-Dimensional Vistas* (New York, 1916) is a substantial book of 134 pages.

26. The English translation sold so well that Bragdon's small press could not meet the demand. He conveyed the project to Alfred A. Knopf, whose revised edition of 1922 is widely available.

27. Webb 1987, p. 255.

28. The Hierophant, as a teacher, stands opposite the Moon, as false teaching. The Chariot, as a conqueror of externals, must confront the Tower, which depicts the punishment of worldly ambition. Justice, as 'Truth', opposes the lying Devil. Strength reinforces the suffering Hanged Man.

29. David V. Barrett, *Sects, 'Cults' and Alternative Religions*, London, 1996, p. 178.

30. As observed by Wilson 1993, pp. 26-8, 36, 41, Ouspensky was able to answer his own questions well before his first meeting with Gurdjieff.

31. Hilton Hotema, *Ancient Tarot Symbolism Revealed*, Lakemont, Georgia, 1969, p. 17.

32. Valentin Tomberg, *Meditations on the Tarot*, Warwick, New York, 1985, p. 590.

33. The content of the Rotterdam lectures has been published: see Valentin Tomberg, *Inner Development* (Hudson, New York, 1992).

34. Valentin Tomberg, *Lazarus, komm heraus (Lazarus, Come Forth)*, Basel and Freiburg, 1985; translated as *Covenant of the Heart*, Robert Powell and James Morgante (trans.), Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1992. Some of our biographical data come from a 1986 interview with Powell as transcribed on the Internet (www.vermon-tel.com/~vtsophia/powinter.htm)

35. This edition has the following note: 'This work was originally written in French and completed in 1967. A German translation of the original French manuscript was published in 1972 by Anton Hain, Meisenheim. A second, completely revised German translation, *Die Grossen Arcana des Tarot*, was published by Herder, Basel in 1983. The first French edition, published in 1980 was an edited version of the original manuscript. A second, revised and complete edition, *Méditations sur les 22 arcanes majeurs du Tarot*, was published in 1984. Both French editions were published by Aubier Montaigne.'

36. Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esoterism*, Albany, New York, p. 98. For a less rapturous opinion, see the review by Richard Smoley, '[Part 2 of] The Rabbi's Tarot ... And the Catholic's', *Gnosis*, No. 7 (spring 1988), pp. 54-5.

37. We have not seen the series. It ended prematurely, at Arcanum VII, when *Odrodzenie* suspended publication. See Rafal T. Prinke, 'Mouni Sadhu Revealed', *The Lamp of Thoth*, Vol. II, no. 5 (1983), pp. 35-6. We are grateful to Dr Prinke for providing us with his article, the first to

unveil the identity of Mouni Sadhu; we simultaneously received a copy from *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

[38](#). Sadhu 1962, p. 13. Dr Prinke doubts this account.

[39](#). Mouni Sadhu, *Concentration*, London, 1959, pp. 50-1. By 1959, Sadhu had returned more securely to his Christian roots, and described de Guaita's work as 'a terrible book' (p. 50).

[40](#). Sadhu 1963, pp. 191-4, reports his success at astral travel.

[41](#). Tereshchenko was not present, but heard the story from Mouni Sadhu in the 1960s (see note 42). Nicholas (or Nicolas) Tereshchenko was born in 1916 in Russia, but studied in Serbia, France and England. After qualifying in medicine at King's College in London, he received a commission in the Indian Medical Service. Esoterism has been his lifelong interest. He has written books and articles on the Fourth Way and on the Tarot.

[42](#). Nicholas Tereshchenko, 'Mouni Sadhu As I Knew Him', *The Lamp of Thoth*, Vol. III, no. 1, 1984, pp. 33-5. *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* provided us with this article, which informed our account of Mouni Sadhu's occultist activities in Sydney.

[43](#). Eva Lucas's drawings now belong to Stuart Kaplan, who reports that their reverse sides have typewritten notes to direct the artist. See S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 262, 264.

[44](#). 'The Absolute / Adaptation of the Great Work / Omnipotence of Nature'.

Notes to Chapter 14

[1](#). A reprint, omitting the last chapter, was issued in 1973 by the Newcastle Publishing Co. of Van Nuys, California.

[2](#). For more on Star, see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 242-3, 249, 254.

[3](#). This odd term appears in this context in English translations of Édouard Schuré's *Les Grands initiés*.

[4](#). For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 190.

[5](#). See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 255, 256, 262.

[6](#). For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 588.

[7](#). Gibson 1996, p. 61.

[8](#). The suggestion is in Gibson 1996, p. 61.

[9](#). Zain 1936, p. 204-6.

[10](#). Zain 1925, pp. 67-73.

[11](#). Zain 1936, pp. 22, 196, 221-2.

[12](#). Zain 1925, p. 6.

[13](#). Lévi/Waite 1896, p. 394.

[14](#). Cagliostro's seal is described in W.R.H. Trowbridge, *Cagliostro*, London, 1910, p. 190, and in Gervaso 1974, p. 75.

[15](#). Marcus Manilius (I century) offers something similar, with zodiacal signs governing decans within other zodiacal signs, but he does not coordinate the signs and sub-signs on the basis of the elements. See Manilius, *Astronomica*, IV, 294-362.

[16](#). Gibson 1996, p. 63.

[17](#). Gibson 1996, p. 63.

[18](#). For an example of horoscope houses illustrated with figures like those in the Tarot, see S. Kaplan 1986, p. 157.

[19](#). For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 219.

[20](#). See S. Kaplan 1978, p. 361. We are grateful to Stuart Kaplan for providing us with a photocopy of this translation.

[21](#). Zain 1925, p. 67, and Zain 1936, p. 69. Genevieve Stebbins was a stage performer and an author of books on dance, gymnastics, posture and voice.

[22](#). For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 236. Records at the US Playing Card Company Private Collection establish the pack's publication before 1967, when it was donated to the

collection.

[23.](#) As the Anglo-American pattern has no Horsemen, and the Catalan pattern has no Queens or 10s, the designer has supplied these missing cards in the appropriate styles.

[24.](#) For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 191.

[25.](#) We have seen the second edition (1955). S. Kaplan 1978, p. 361, gives the title and author but nothing further.

[26.](#) All 78 cards have astrological correspondences. For the first 22, Iglesias gives: Sun in Leo, Moon in Cancer, Jupiter in Sagittarius, Uranus in Aquarius, Mercury in Virgo, Venus in Taurus, Neptune in Pisces, Saturn in Capricorn, Mars in Aries, Pluto in Scorpio, Sun in Aries, Moon in Taurus, Mercury in Gemini, Jupiter in Cancer, Neptune in Leo, Mercury in Virgo, Saturn in Libra, Uranus in Scorpio, Pluto in Sagittarius, Mars in Capricorn, Neptune in Aquarius, Venus in Pisces.

[27.](#) See S. Kaplan 1978, pp. 248-9. In 1984 US Games reprinted the 1971 pack, but with the Spanish titles converted to English: see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 585.

[28.](#) As the 1970s yielded to the 1980s, Benavides's astrology shifted in emphasis, from Iglesias' zodiacal attributions (omitting the planets) to his planetary attributions (often omitting the zodiac). In both cases, Benavides changed a few attributions, owing to a different view of the astrological powers themselves.

[29.](#) See S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 96, 98.

[30.](#) See S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 179, 186, 187.

[31.](#) See S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 252, 253.

[32.](#) The book was revised and augmented as *Le Tarot des grandes initiés de l'ancienne Égypte* (Boucherville, Quebec, 1994).

[33.](#) See S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 266-7.

Notes to Chapter 15

[1.](#) Both girls married, to become Louisa Billenstein and Annie Speckman.

[2.](#) The main office was at 44 West 23rd Street, New York; the Cincinnati complex was at 140 Race Street.

[3.](#) Its office was then at 330 $\frac{1}{2}$ Race St, Cincinnati.

[4.](#) His early publications, all at Cincinnati, were *The Secret Doctrine of the Ancient Mysteries* (1886), *Mystic Masonry, or, The Symbols of Freemasonry and the Greater Mysteries of Antiquity* (1887), *The Nature and Aims of Theosophy* (1889), *A Study of Man and the Way to Health* (1889). The last of these deals with 'Evolution' and 'Involution' in terms reminiscent of Barlet.

[5.](#) Buck's office was at 136 West 8th Street. The Lloyd Library was then located three blocks north, at 204 West Court Street, but later moved to 309 West Court and moved again to 917 Plum Street. The collection is regarded as one of the world's finest botanical and pharmaceutical collections.

[6.](#) Godwin, Chanel & Deveney 1995, p. 358.

[7.](#) The Norwood Public Library currently displays the painting, a generous gift from Knapp's grandchildren.

[8.](#) Pettibone Brothers were the publishers.

[9.](#) Our translation comes from an inscription within an illustration in Hall 1928, p. CCIII. The drawing is apparently reworked from a print in Heinrich Khunrath's *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae* (Hanover, 1609). The warning also figures in Johann Valentin Andreae's *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz* (Strasbourg, 1616). The Latin source is Virgil's *Aeneid*, book VI, 258, where the words are intoned by the Cumaean Sibyl, who guards a sacred grove. Knapp also could have known the passage through Crowley's quotation of it in his *Liber Israfel*, published in *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. VII, March 1912, London, p. 23.

[10.](#) Ethel Behrman pursued a career in radio: she read children's stories as a narrator for Cincinnati station WSAI, then owned by the United States Playing Card Company, in Norwood. She wrote a book, *Doorways* (Cincinnati, 1936). Don became a graphic artist, Emily a doctor, Marjorie a teacher. We are indebted to Marjorie Behrman for biographical data about her grandfather.

[11.](#) John Uri Lloyd, *Felix Moses, the Beloved Jew of Stringtown on the Pike* (Cincinnati, 1930).

[12.](#) For biographies see Corinne Miller Simons, *John Uri Lloyd: His Life and His Works* (Cincinnati, 1972), and Michael A. Flannery, 'John Uri Lloyd: the Life and Legacy of an Illustrious Heretic', *Queen City Heritage*, Vol. 50, Autumn 1992, pp. 3-14.

[13.](#) Florence Palmer (née Paisley) was born and raised in the small town of Haverhill, Massachusetts. No provincial, she studied at Wellesley College and travelled extensively. She married Arthur Whitney Palmer, a successful varnish merchant. They had three daughters, one of whom died in infancy. The other two, Louise and May, accompanied their mother on a European tour lasting two years during their adolescence. When widowed, Florence received a comfortable income from her husband's investments and his army pension. For a biography of Florence Palmer, see Manly P. Hall, *Growing up with Grandmother* (Los Angeles, 1985).

[14.](#) See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 255-6, 262.

[15.](#) Wigston had previously written *A New Study of Shakespeare* (London, 1884); *Bacon, Shakespeare and the Rosicrucians* (London, 1888); *Francis Bacon, Poet, Prophet, Philosopher, versus Phantom Captain Shakespeare, the Rosicrucian Mask* (London, 1890), Chicago, 1891. Wigston was not alone in believing that Shakespeare was Bacon or that Bacon was a Rosicrucian. Wigston was aware of Ignatius Donnelly's *The Great Cryptogram* (Chicago, 1887), and Mrs Henry Pott's *Francis Bacon and His Secret Society* (Chicago, 1891).

[16.](#) W.F.C. Wigston, *The Columbus of Literature*, Chicago, 1892, p. 183.

[17.](#) Hall 1928, p. CXLI.

[18.](#) For the information in this paragraph, we are grateful to Dr S. Hoeller, a personal friend of Manly Hall. See Stephan A. Hoeller, 'A Sage for All Seasons: Manly P. Hall', *Gnosis*, No. 18, Winter 1991, pp. 10-11.

[19.](#) *The Table (or Pinax)* is a Greek allegory formerly attributed to Cebes of Thebes (fl. 400 BC), but now dated to the Roman Empire. The 'table' is described as a relief sculpture decorating the temple of Kronos but probably had no existence except as a literary device. For a complete study, see John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, *The Tabula of Cebes*, Chico, California, 1983.

[20.](#) The pack has been available from the PRS through US Games Systems since 1985.

[21.](#) Marie Hall had been married previously, to an engineer named George Bauer. Her maiden name was Marie Schweikert. She was born near Leutkirch, Wurttemberg, in 1904. During her adolescence she moved from Germany to the USA. She married Manly Hall on 6 November 1950. She published a series of books influenced by Manly Hall's faith in Francis Bacon: the latter's dream of a utopian society was being realised in American democracy, according to the Halls.

[22.](#) However, Knapp has labelled the sixth trump as L'Amouraux instead of L'Amoureux.

[23.](#) The earlier work differs in that *Beth* is Nature, *Gimel* is Force and *Pe* is Wisdom. The differences are great among Jewish Cabalists: see A. Kaplan 1990, pp. 178-9.

[24.](#) Cf. Emma Hardinge Britten, *Nineteenth Century Miracles*, New York, 1884, p. 44, quoting from *Art Magic*, New York, 1876, p. 434.

[25.](#) Knapp's correspondences between elements and suits are also found in A.E. Thierens, *Astrology and the Tarot*, Philadelphia, 1930. The parallels are almost certainly fortuitous. Thierens advances unique correspondences for the trumps. He aligns the first 12 with the zodiacal circle from Aries to Pisces; trumps XIII-XXI he assigns to Saturn, Mercury, Mars, Uranus, Venus, Moon, Sun, Jupiter and Neptune, respectively. The Fool stands for Earth.

[26.](#) J. Augustus Knapp, *Divination with Cards* [booklet], Los Angeles, 1930 = *Knapp-Hall Tarot Instructions*, New York, 1985, p. 27.

[27.](#) Papus 1889 attributes *Gimel* (the Hebrew G) to the Empress trump, which he associates with female aspects (Venus-Urania, womb, woman).

[28.](#) The mutual source for the formula is *Le Dogme et rituel de la haute magie*, Paris, 1856, by Éliphas Lévi, who took the formula from A.V. Frankenberg's note in his edition of Guillaume Postel's *Absconditorum a Constitutione Mundi Clavis*, Amsterdam, 1646. But Frankenberg did not intend any reference to the Tarot: his complicated diagram involves a cross with each arm supporting a letter: R, O, T, A.

[29.](#) Éliphas Lévi, *Histoire de la magie*, Paris, 1860 = *The History of Magic*, A.E. Waite (trans.), London, 1913, pp. 77-81.

[30.](#) Hall 1928, p. LVII-LX.

[31.](#) Enrica Leospo, *La Mensa Isiaca di Torino*, Leyden, 1978.

[32.](#) Hall 1928, pp. CXVII-CXX.

[33.](#) Harriette Augusta Curtiss and F. Homer Curtiss, *The Key to the Universe*, San Francisco, 1915, p. 342.

[34.](#) Hall's fourth heraldic symbol has no square, but four eyes arranged in rotational symmetry. Hall regarded *L'Empereur* as the Platonists' creator-god ('*Demiurgus*' or 'Great King'). See Hall 1928, p. CXXX. The tetrad of eyes refers to the number 4, but also to the trump's supposed solar symbolism, since Hall and the Curtisses speak of the sun as a celestial 'eye' and as a manifestation of the Creator.

[35.](#) Hall 1928, p. XXXII.

[36.](#) The Pythagorean tetractys combined the symbolism of the numbers 4 and 10 ($4+3+2+1=10$). The Curtisses wanted to place spirituality above materialism: they extolled the number 5 (symbolising the quintessence, the spirit) as superior to 4 (symbolising the material elements). On the Pythagorean model, 5 can expand to Fifteen ($5+4+3+2+1=15$), which the Curtisses used to name their mystical Order.

Notes to Chapter 16

[1.](#) Personal correspondence from 'Soror V' for Builders of the Adytum, Ltd, Los Angeles, California (6 July 1995).

[2.](#) The project was undertaken by Ronald Bruce Ferrara. His letters of enquiry to Helen Butler are extant. At that time (1980), she was the local historian in Case's home town (Fairport, New York).

[3.](#) On 28 June 1871 Case married the youngest member of the Ives family, which was socially prominent. This wife was Mary A. Ives, born in 1842 in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. She was the only surviving child of Lydia and J.H. Ives, a businessman in Rochester. Lydia's father, Peter Ripley, was one of Fairport's earliest settlers. Mary was received into the Fairport Congregational Church on 3 May 1863. She died, unexpectedly, in July 1875. Her obituary in the *Fairport Herald Mail* (23 July 1875) oddly makes no mention of her husband. Case was undoubtedly consoled by Congregationalists, and he joined their church in 1876.

[4.](#) The girl died in Greenport, a village on Piconik Bay, Long Island. The Cases probably were visiting relatives there. The census of 1910 lists William Case with his wife Carrie (née Call) and their children Charles W. Case and Helen C. Case. William probably was the brother of Charles D. Case.

[5.](#) Davies 1963, p. 1.

[6.](#) The house was built in the 1820s as a tavern, also serving as a meeting-house and a post office. The building was moved to its present location, 10 East Church Street, Fairport, New York.

7. The second location of the Dickinson Library was at 123 South Main Street, a brick house built by Thomas H. Dickinson, Julia's cousin. This building no longer exists.

8. Bertha Bruner Bown, *Facts and Reminiscences about the Dickinson Library* (unpublished typescript), Fairport, n.d. [c. 1938], p. 4.

9. For this and other details about the Case family's religious affiliation, we are grateful to Joyce E. Cowden, Secretary at the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fairport, New York.

10. Correspondence of 1980, to Ronald Ferrara from Helen Butler (see note 2), who cites 'The North Wind Doth Blow' (church memorabilia, undated).

11. The Fairport census of 1900 lists Charles Case (unemployed) with his two sons and his mother-in-law, Electa (aged 75). Historians at Fairport refer to Charles Case's third wife only as Lelia or Leila. The Fairport Congregational Church removed his name from its rolls on 24 October 1900, and transferred him to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Clifton Springs, New York. Also from about 1900, the register of the Fairport church has a note saying that Paul Case moved to Rochester. The census of 1915 offers no trace of the Cases or of Electa Foster in Fairport.

12. Bragdon 1938, pp. 307-10.

13. Bragdon 1938, pp. 281-346.

14. Davies 1963, p. 2.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Case 1947, p. 18.

18. So notes Case's publisher, Macoy Publishing, on the book jacket for *The Tarot*. There remains a possibility that earlier writing by Case was published anonymously or pseudonymously. He is said to have assisted in writing the anonymous *Kybalion* (Chicago, 1905). In occult circles, this is attributed principally to William Walker Atkinson (1862-1952), an author who combined Hermetism, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, New Thought and yoga.

19. Twelve chapters run sporadically from March 1916 to September 1917. See Paul F. Case, 'The Secret Doctrine of the Tarot', *The Word*, Vol. 22, pp. 353ff; Vol. 23, pp. 7ff, 79ff, 161ff, 197ff, 352ff; Vol. 25, pp. 9ff, 84ff, 144ff, 207ff, 273ff, 367ff.

20. H.W. Percival, 'Ghosts Who Never Were Men', *The Word*, Vol. 22, no. 3, December 1915, p. 133.

21. His initiation is incorrectly dated at 1910 in Cynthia Giles, *The Tarot: History, Mystery, and Lore*, New York, 1992, p. 55. Contrast Greer 1995, pp. 350ff.

22. Paul F. Case, [Correspondence] *Azoth*, Vol. 8, no. 2, February 1921, p. 54.

23. The issues for July and August were edited by Gertrude Whitty Wise, presumably a relative of Michael Whitty.

24. Paul F. Case, *An Introduction to the Study of the Tarot*, Buffalo, 1927, p. 23.

25. Greer 1995, p. 354.

26. Greer 1995, p. 452 n23.

27. Francis X. King, *The Rebirth of Magic*, London, 1982, pp. 166-8.

28. The Thoth Hermes Temple in New York did not dissolve until the 1930s.

29. At the end of this text, Case invites the reader to contact him for information about the Builders of the Adytum. Some editions give his Boston office; others give his Fairport residence.

30. Quoted by David St Clair, *The Psychic World of California*, New York, 1972, p. 244.

31. Case 1947, p. 23.

32. We do not know Harriet's maiden name. Case was reportedly married five times, 'twice to the same woman' (this from an unidentified member of BOTA, according to Lee Moffit who in 1997 compiled a 'Case Timeline' and posted it on an internet Web site, www.mousetrap.net). Some members of BOTA believe that Paul Case had at least one daughter.

- [33.](#) Arisa Victor (ed.), *Thursday Night Tarot*, Van Nuys, California, 1989.
- [34.](#) K. Frank Jensen, 'Waite/Smith Plagiates and Odd Editions', *Manteia*, No. 15, November 1995, p. 13.
- [35.](#) Reckoning from her birth in 1889. Some biographical dictionaries give 1879. The State of New Jersey professes to have no birth certificate for Jessie Burns Parke.

Notes to Chapter 17

- [1.](#) The police estimated the influx at 75,000. See Lucas 1995, p. 28. We are grateful to Prof. Lucas for his personal assistance.
- [2.](#) Lucas 1995, pp. 173, 260 fn 3.
- [3.](#) Kenney 1978, p. 42.
- [4.](#) Kenney 1978, pp. 125-141.
- [5.](#) For more on the importance of light in the Order, see Kenney 1978, pp. 112-6.
- [6.](#) The Holy Order of MANS, 'Uniting All Faiths' (prospectus), San Francisco, 1973, p. 22-4.
- [7.](#) Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi Maioris scilicet et Minoris Metaphysica atque Technica Historia*, Oppenheim, 1617, Vol II, part b, p. 181.
- [8.](#) Lucas 1995, p. 123.
- [9.](#) Lucas 1995, p. 138.
- [10.](#) Lucas 1995, pp. 226, 287 n 101.
- [11.](#) In 1982, Nathaniel D. Aiken finished painting a pack of 100 cards, based on Anthony's trilogy (see S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 61, 66). In 1983, the 'New Animation Tarot: an Animation Deck' was privately published by Liz Shandra, Steve O'Dell and Lilly Estkowski (see S. Kaplan 1990, pp. 390, 397).

Notes to Chapter 18

- [1.](#) The Insight Institute is listed as maintaining an office in Worcester Park, near London.
- [2.](#) Frank Lind, *How to Read the Tarot*, Hastings, 1968, p. 1.
- [3.](#) Lind 1969, pp. 58-60, links 'MA' with Atlantis ('since the submerged continent was called Ma or Mu'), Lemuria ('the land of our lunar ancestors') and Mary ('the Moon Mother watching over the birth of the Christ Child, of the Spirit entering into the material world').
- [4.](#) This appears to have been in a limited edition. Another publisher undertook more ambitious printings (London, 1969, and Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, 1979).
- [5.](#) We are grateful to John Shephard for providing us with Lind's lessons (*How to Read the Tarot*, Hastings, 1968), issued by the Society of Metaphysicians (alternatively The Metaphysical Research Group).
- [6.](#) The *sephiroth* enter Lind's discussion regarding Justice: 'the seated woman represents *Chesed* (Mercy); the Sword *Geburah* (Severity, the Rigour of the Law); and the Balance itself, the equilibrium (*Tiphereth*, the centre of Harmony), kept rightly between the two' (Lind 1969, p. 31).
- [7.](#) Émile Grillo de Givry, *Le Musée des sorciers, mages et alchimistes* (Paris, 1929), translated as *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy* (Boston, 1931), and as *Picture Museum of Sorcery, Magic and Alchemy* (New York, 1963).
- [8.](#) Jean Chaboseau, *Le Tarot, essai d'interprétation selon les principes de l'Hermétisme* (Paris, 1946).
- [9.](#) Van Rijnberk 1947.
- [10.](#) Lind 1969, p. 92.
- [11.](#) Lind 1969, p. 68.
- [12.](#) For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 269, and Rachel Pollack, *The New Tarot*, Woodstock, New York, 1990, pp. 45-6.

[13.](#) Her discussion of the Hanged Man looks forward to the level ‘where “Thy Will,” and no more “my will,” is done’. Much the same allusion had been used by Paul Foster Case, *The Tarot*, Richmond, Virginia, 1947, p. 136.

[14.](#) For Gardner's biography, we are indebted to Richard Cavendish, *Man, Myth and Magic*, New York, 1970, Vol. 24, p. 3239.

[15.](#) See Tammo de Jongh, *The Magic of the Soul: the 12 Aspects of the Mind* (London, 1974). De Jongh also painted ‘portraits’ of the ‘twelve aspects’ as a series of cards; but this was not a Tarot.

[16.](#) The relatively new movement of ‘Wicca’ was then flourishing in Brighton. John Upton, having joined a Brighton coven in 1976, was introduced to a ‘Witches’ Tarot’, which he saw again in Dundonald and on the Isle of Arran. The trumps feature pre-Christian motifs and emphasise sexuality and fertility. After Upton joined an Ayrshire coven in 1979, he followed the customary models in designing his handmade ‘Tarot of the Ayrshire Witches’. For illustrations and more details, see K. Frank Jensen, ‘A Standard “Witches’ Tarot” Pattern?’, *Manteia*, No. 13, February 1995, pp. 6-8. Jensen also mentions the publication of similar trump cards in Arnold and Patricia Crowther's *The Secrets of Ancient Witchcraft, with The Witches Tarot* (Secaucus, New Jersey, 1974). Arnold Crowther made his cards by hand, and is said to have provided copies for Doreen Valiente, another witch associated with a Brighton coven.

[17.](#) The text is a revised version of Gardner's *Accelerate Your Evolution* (London, 1969). A second edition of *Evolution through the Tarot* (New York, 1977) has an appended Part 2, in which Gardner contemplates trumps in arrays like those used by Oswald Wirth.

[18.](#) From this work, Gardner published excerpts as *Fortunetelling by Tarot Cards* (London, 1974).

[19.](#) In Gardner's *Evolution through the Tarot*, the Swords are symbolic of Air, and the Wheel of Fortune is ruled by Jupiter. However, he gives no rationale for these correspondences.

Notes to Chapter 19

[1.](#) Knight 1965, Vol. I, p. 235.

[2.](#) Knight 1965, Vol. I, p. 91.

[3.](#) Knight 1975, pp. 123-4.

[4.](#) Knight 1965, Vol. II, p. 157. From the earliest surviving examples onwards, the Popess has always been depicted in Christian, never in pagan, form, and was never known as ‘Pope Joan’. The replacement of the Pope and Popess by Jupiter and Juno is unknown in Italy, but occurred in the so-called Tarot de Besançon, a variant of the Tarot de Marseille used by German speakers in German-speaking Swiss cantons and in Germany and Austria.

[5.](#) Gareth Knight, *Gareth Knight Tarot Deck*, booklet packaged with the cards, New York, 1985, p. 25. On p. 14, the Hermit is equated to Prudence: this virtue is not associated with trump 21.

[6.](#) Knight 1991, p. 194.

[7.](#) Knight 1986, p. 185. In private correspondence, he has expressed the view that, since the Tarot works as a framework for imaginative work of an occult nature, it is natural to assume it to have been designed as such. If it should be proved that it was not so designed, he would not be perturbed, however, since it manifestly works. It may be, he comments, that any association of images from the cultural store would serve as well, by allowing the mind to project structures of its own, or of a higher form of perception, within it.

[8.](#) Knight 1986, p. 183.

[9.](#) Knight 1986, p. 80.

[10.](#) W. Gray 1969, pp. 93-131; there is a little more about the Tarot on pp. 219-21.

[11.](#) W. Gray 1969, p. 102.

[12.](#) W. Gray 1997, p. 151.

- [13.](#) W. Gray, 1988, p. 2.
- [14.](#) W. Gray, 1988, pp. 2 and 3. The advanced beings are later said to have been ‘capable of breeding with the species of humanity then found on this earth’ (p. 122).
- [15.](#) W. Gray, 1988, p. 244.
- [16.](#) W. Gray 1988, p. 66.

Notes to Chapter 20

- [1.](#) The title page can differ from the outer cover. At least one edition (1916) has a cover saying, ‘The Key to the Tarot: Oracles behind the Veil’.
- [2.](#) The book’s introductory pages differ depending on editions by different publishers. It was also issued as *Tarot and Astrology: The Pursuit of Destiny*.
- [3.](#) Some editions apparently had colour accents: see Zolar’s New Astrological Tarot, illustrated in S. Kaplan 1978, p. 294. A 1983 reprint by US Games Systems has accents of turquoise and magenta. The depictions of planetary deities are substantially those which appeared in ‘Zolar’s Planetary Fortune Telling Cards with Lucky Numbers’ (1942).
- [4.](#) Albano’s Tarot was reprinted by US Games Systems in 1991.
- [5.](#) Albano’s miniature Tarot was reprinted, with altered proportions, by US Games Systems in 1987.
- [6.](#) The same book, with a few changes on the introductory pages, is Leo Louis Martello’s *Reading the Tarot: Understanding the Cards of Destiny* (New York, 1990). Martello founded the Witches International Craft Associates (WICA), and edited *The Wica Newsletter* and *Witchcraft Digest*. He lectured and wrote extensively on the occult, parapsychology and graphology.
- [7.](#) For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, pp. 274-5.
- [8.](#) For more derivatives, see K. Frank Jensen, ‘Waite/Smith Plagiaters and Odd Editions’, *Manteia*, No. 15, pp. 12-15.
- [9.](#) Basil Ivan Rákóczi wrote *The Painted Caravan* (the Hague, 1954), with a fantasy about the Gypsy invention and transmission of the Tarot. In fact, Gypsy Tarotism is historically insignificant: see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 214-33.
- [10.](#) The year is incorrectly given as 1907 in Frances C. Locher (ed.), *Contemporary Authors*, Vols. 93-6 (one book), Chicago, 1980, p. 191.
- [11.](#) Lester Cohen’s Judaism was utterly secularised. He was the son of Hyman Cohen. At the age of 12, Hyman emigrated with his family from Tsarist Russia to New York. He was immediately put to work in a tailor’s sweatshop. Hyman’s disillusionment accompanied the demise of his religious faith. He and the adult Lester collaborated on a novel, *Aaron Traum*, New York, 1930.
- [12.](#) *Oscar Wilde: a Play* (New York, 1928), was published as a book.
- [13.](#) Translated as *Die Pardways* (Stuttgart, 1930).
- [14.](#) See Gertrude Moakley, *The Tarot Cards Painted by Bonifacio Bembo for the Visconti-Sforza Family* (New York, 1966).
- [15.](#) Daniel Cohen and Paula Cohen, with Eden Gray, *Marbelling on Fabric* (Loveland, Colorado, 1991).
- [16.](#) Eden Gray, *Mastering the Tarot*, New York, 1971, p. 127.
- [17.](#) When she places the four cards on the arms of the cross, she deals to the South (past), West (present), North (possible future) and East (near future), whereas Waite dealt to the North (the best future possible under the circumstances), South (the past), East (present) and West (near future).

Notes to Chapter 21

- [1.](#) P.-S. Darc, ‘Comment se servir du tarot divinatoire’, *Le Voile d’Isis*, 1927, pp. 829-40.

2. Quénaidit was an associate of Dr Emmanuel Lelande (1868-1926). See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 276 n34. Lelande, under the pseudonym Marc Haven, wrote *Le Tarot: l'alphabet hébraïque et les nombres* (Lyons, 1937).

3. Joseph Maxwell, 'Symbolisme des arcanes majeurs', *Le Voile d'Isis*, special issue, 1928, pp. 541-58.

4. Beuchet 2000, p. 33.

5. These biographical data come from Ivor Powell's *Introduction to The Tarot* (London, 1975, New York, 1977), his translation of Maxwell's *Le Tarot*.

6. Maxwell makes the trumps, I-XXI respectively correspond to Sun, Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Sagittarius, Mars, Libra, Pisces, Capricorn, Leo, Aries, Saturn, Aquarius, Head of the Dragon, Tail of the Dragon, Taurus, Cancer, Gemini, Scorpio, Virgo. The Fool is not involved.

7. For biographical data on Marteau, we are indebted to Beuchet 2000, pp. 31-9. Beuchet (note 11) records Marteau as having married Hélène Tetrais and then Sheila Douglas, before his last wife, Pascaline. We are grateful to Thierry Depaulis for providing us with Beuchet's article.

8. See Paul Marteau, 'Connaître l'ésotérisme', *Le Connaissance: Revue des lettres et des idées*, June, pp. 512-3; September, pp. 696-8; December pp. 902-3, 1921. See also Beuchet 2000, pp. 34, 39n17.

9. Beuchet 2000, p. 34.

10. For complete information, see Georges Muchery, *Le Tarot Astrologique* (Paris, 1927). For illustrations, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 266.

11. Beuchet 2000, p. 39n1, tells us that Paulhan's text had appeared previously as 'L'usage des tarots', *Bulletin de la Guilde*, Lausanne, No. 6, June 1949, pp. 130-4.

12. He had also written an occultist study, 'Le Tarot', *Le Voile d'Isis*, Nos. 104-5, August-September 1928, pp. 535-40. He too emphasises the Tarot de Marseille's colour symbolism, and warns that it has been distorted in the old packs for games players.

13. 'Tarot de Marseille' was a term used by Papus, as if it was a commonplace. It was popularised by Grimaud's 'Ancien Tarot de Marseille' and by Marteau's book title.

14. See S. Kaplan 1978, p. 231.

15. See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, p. 199.

16. See Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 160-2, 202-3 and plate 12.

17. Does this indicate that Edmond (1829-81) taught Fomalhaut (1854-1925)? Or is there a more convoluted connection between their ideas?

18. Most of the trumps are in the style known through the French cardmaker Nicholas Conver, but a few imitate a style common in Switzerland: compare the drawings in Stuart R. Kaplan, *Tarot Classic* (New York, 1972).

19. Runes and trumps are differently coordinated by Sigurd Agrell, by Edred Thorsson and by Hermann Haendl: for their lists, see Nigel Pennick, *Magical Alphabets*, York Beach, Maine [= *The Secret Lore of Runes and Other Ancient Alphabets*, London], 1992, p. 233.

20. At the close of *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, Mme Blavatsky says that popular demand could elicit a third volume. She did not live to fulfill this promise herself, but she left notes sufficient for her successor, Annie Besant, to comply in 1897. The book's 1925 edition by The Theosophical Publishing House oddly says, 'This spurious "Third Volume" forms no part of the genuine two volume *Secret Doctrine* of H.P. Blavatsky'. Librarians nevertheless catalogue the book under her name.

21. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. III, London, 1897, p. 108.

22. This term is from Jules Eudes, marquis de Mirville (1802-73), a conservative Catholic who compiled reports of supernatural phenomena, and wrote *Pneumatology* (Paris, 1853), which he subsequently expanded (Vols. I-V, 1863-4, Vol. VI, 1868). He was troubled by spiritualists and occultists: he thought them genuine, but empowered by Satan.

[23](#). For a chapter on 'Hekate's Top and the Inyx-Wheel', see Sarah Iles Johnson, *Hekate Soteira*, Atlanta, 1990, pp. 90-110.

[24](#). Subtitle: *Being Notes Relative to the Twenty-two Paths of the Tree of Life and the Tarot Trumps together with a New Way of Approach to this Ancient Symbol, More Suited to the Present Aquarian Age, and Entitled THE HORUS ARRANGEMENT*.

[25](#). Thierens's Tarot book was reprinted as *Astrology and the Tarot* (Hollywood, California, 1975). Thierens, defying Waite (who wrote the book's Introduction), places Justice and Strength as trumps VIII and XI, respectively. Thierens says that the Fool 'must evidently be taken for the principle of the Earth itself' (p. 39). Thierens's other correspondences, from I to XXI, are Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Saturn, Mercury, Mars, Uranus, Venus, Moon, Sun, Jupiter, Neptune.

[26](#). Ernest Wood, *The Seven Rays*, Wheaton, Illinois, 1925, p. 142.

[27](#). Charles G. Leland, *Etruscan Magic and Occult Remedies*, New York, 1963, p. 130. The original title was *Etruscan Roman Ruins in Popular Tradition* (New York and London, 1892).

[28](#). Leland 1899, p. 95.

[29](#). Leland's relatives said that he was himself an occultist: see Margot Adler, *Drawing down the Moon*, New York, 1979, p. 56.

[30](#). Some Tarotists have noticed Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550-1650*, Oxford, 1989, pp. 162, 163, which cite two instances of alleged witches having used the Devil trump in ritual settings. This is evidence that Venetian women merely exploited a specific image, easily available in the Tarot, and not evidence that witchcraft had absorbed the entire imagery of the Tarot as a meaningful ingredient. On the Gypsies as late-comers to Tarotism, see Decker, Depaulis & Dummett 1996, pp. 214ff.

[31](#). His reports are probably inauthentic. He himself was a political rebel, and may have publicised witchcraft as propaganda for his feminist politics: see T.C. Lethbridge, *Witches*, New York, 1968, p. 9. Leland's reliance on Maddalena is troublesome, for she may have been tailoring her contributions to suit his preferences. He in fact says 'this woman by long practice has perfectly learned what few understand, or just what I want, and how to extract it from those of her kind': see Leland 1899, p. vii. Much of Maddalena's writing does not resemble a folk piece, but is a poor attempt at high-flown literature. She and her sisterhood may have concocted something merely to see their words in print. There is no hope that her traditions really reach back to a pre-Christian religion. At most, their origin could be mediaeval. One scholar speculates that they do not depend on real witch lore, but on popular stereotypes of the Waldensians, perhaps as described in defamatory tracts: see Elliot Rose, *A Razor for a Goat*, Toronto, 1989, p. 216.

[32](#). We are grateful to Mr R.A. Gilbert for drawing our attention to *The Canon* and supplying some information about its author.

[33](#). It would be of interest to know if Stirling ever encountered the ideas of George Felt, who is thought to have visited England in the late 1870s (see [Chapter 1](#)). Felt applied his 'Cabalistic' canon of proportion to ancient architecture and to Egyptian hieroglyphs, among other things, but is not known to have investigated the Tarot.

[34](#). For this idea, Stirling may have looked no further than the Theosophical essay by Barlet in Papus's *Le Tarot des Bohémiens* (see [Chapter 1](#)).

[35](#). Westcott's discussion (*The Theosophical Review*, Vol. XXII, 1898, pp. 85-90) is noted by R.A. Gilbert in the Introduction to the revised edition of *The Canon* (York Beach, Maine, 1999).

[36](#). First printed in Crowley's 'Curriculum of A.A.', *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. I (March 1919), Detroit, p. 22, and then in Crowley 1929, p. 211 (= Michaelson 1989, p. 337).

[37](#). *The Canon* is mentioned incidentally in Kenneth Grant, *Nightside of Eden*, London, 1977, pp. 253, 289.

[38](#). First published in *The Equinox*, Vol. I, no. VII March 1912, London, pp. 69-74; reprinted in *Gems from the Equinox*, ed. Israel Regardie, St Paul, 1974, Las Vegas, 1974, 1988, pp. 663-71; and in *The Holy Books of Thelema*, ed. Grady Louis McMurtry, New York, 1983, pp. 197-203.

[39](#). These names recall the demons listed in mediaeval grimoires, and also the 'Watchers' in 1 Enoch (the Ethiopic Book of Enoch).

[40](#). Swiss artist H.R. Giger has used the title for his *Necronomicon* (Basle, 1977; London, 1978; Zurich, 1984), and *Necronomicon 2* (Zurich, 1985), books about his visual art. He shows a familiarity with images from Lovecraft and from Crowley. Giger in 1992 issued his 'Baphomet Tarot', and helped to explain it in an ample book: see Akron [C.F. Frey] and H.R. Giger, *Baphomet – Tarot der Unterwelt (Baphomet – Tarot of the Underworld)*, Basle, 1992). Giger also happens to have been a friend of Sergius Golowin, whose *Die Welt des Tarot (The World of Tarot)*, Basle, 1975), describes the 1975 'Zigeuner Tarot (Gypsy Tarot)' by Walter Wegmüller. For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1978, p. 293, and Pollack 1989, pp. 94-5. For Wegmüller's 1982 'Neuzeit Tarot (New Age Tarot)', see Pollack 1989, pp. 49-51.

[41](#). For example: Simon, *Necronomicon* (New York, 1977), George Hay (ed.), *The Necronomicon: The Book of Dead Names* (London, 1978) and Robert Turner, *The R'lyeh Text* (London, 1995).

[42](#). Some fans mistakenly suppose that Lovecraft was actually a member of an occult society, and that Crowley had met or indirectly contacted Lovecraft: see Erik Davis, 'Calling Cthulhu', *Gnosis*, No. 37, autumn 1995, pp. 56-63, and Dan Clore, 'Cribbing Incantations', *Gnosis*, No. 38, winter 1996, p. 4.

[43](#). Grant 1992, p. 263.

[44](#). One of Kenneth Grant's American associates is Sister Nema, who involves the Tarot in her *Maat Magic: A Guide to Self-Initiation* (York Beach, Maine, 1995).

[45](#). Grant 1992, pp. 86, 190, 268, cites Linda Falorio's unpublished work, *The English Qabalah, Liber CXV*, written in Pittsburgh in 1979.

[46](#). For a review of the pack and the book, see Andrew Gaze, 'Cards from the Womb of Night', *Manteia*, No. 3 (April 1996), pp. 37-9, and corrections in *Manteia*, No. 4 (September 1990), p. 7. The practical use of The Shadow Tarot is further explained in a booklet (35 pp.) by Mishlen Linden, *Typhonian Teratomas: The Shadow of the Abyss* (Cincinnati, 1991).

[47](#). William Lindsay Gresham, preface to *The Greater Trumps*, New York, 1950, p. 11.

[48](#). Our knowledge of John Cooke comes from K. Frank Jensen, 'Word of One Tarot: A reissue of The Work of John Starr Cooke', *Manteia*, No. 11 (May 1994), pp. 4-5.

[49](#). See Anonymous [John Starr Cooke and Rosalind Sharpe Wall], *G – the Royal Maze: Guide to the Game of Destiny*, Kentfield, California, 1969, p. 60.

[50](#). Anonymous [John Starr Cooke and Rosalind Sharpe Wall], *T -- The New Tarot: The Tarot for the Aquarian Age*, Kentfield, California, 1969, p. 3. For Thoth as an Atlantean fugitive who brought enlightenment to the Egyptians, see the works of the American occultist Doreal (Claude Doggins). They also involve terms and ideas from Hermetism, Cabalism, Theosophy and the Lovecraft myths. Doreal (d. 1963) founded the Brotherhood of the White Temple.

[51](#). Timothy Leary later wrote on the Tarot in *The Game of Life* (Culver City, California, 1979; Phoenix, Arizona, 1993).

[52](#). The 'maps' in this book are *I Ching*, Tantra, Tarot, alchemy, astrology and Actualism.

[53](#). The phrase is Frank Jensen's (see note 48). He also says that David Quigley, an American Tarot reader and therapist, used the Cooke/Sharpe Tarot as the basis for a treatise (apparently unpublished), *The Romance Cycle – Sexual Evolution through Tarot Symbolism*, in which the author reorganises the pack and aligns it with the seven chakras of Hindu belief. In 1975, Quigley directed Raphael Robinson in repainting the Cooke/Sharpe Tarot (for illustration, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 482).

[54](#). Not only did Frieda Harris obey Crowley in allowing their cards to illustrate concepts from the Golden Dawn, she exhibited the original paintings, and authored handlists that explained the doctrinal meaning of each image.

[55](#). According to S. Kaplan 1990, p. 152, this pack was also called the Sangreal One-Color Tarot. He says that Simpson is now Harp Printing Co.

[56](#). The correspondences are tabulated on pp. 102-3. Essentially the same table is given in Richard Cavendish, *The Tarot*, London and New York, 1975, p. 58, except that it omits the column for 'Colours', and adds that for 'Deities'.

[57](#). Jensen 1994, p. 4. Jensen cites an article by Anpu in *Magical Blend*, a neo-pagan journal.

[58](#). The artist's name is incorrectly given as Jerry Kaye in S. Kaplan 1978, p. 186.

[59](#). For illustration, see S. Kaplan 1990, p. 119. See also S. Kaplan 1978, p. 187.

[60](#). Kay's attributions are those of the Golden Dawn. For the Emperor and the Star, Kay adds subordinate letters that preserve Crowley's preferences too.

[61](#). For an introduction to Dee's communications with spirits, see Robert Turner, *Elizabethan Magic* (Longmead, 1989).

[62](#). For a different system coordinating Enochian letters with Tarot trumps, see Gerald and Betty Schueler, *Enochian Magic*, St Paul, Minnesota, 1992 [1st edn, 1984], p. 9, or Gerald J. Schueler, *An Advanced Guide to Enochian Magic*, St Paul, Minnesota, 1992 [1st edn, 1987], p. 25. Yet the Enochian alphabet does not appear in the Schuelers' own 'Enochian Tarot', illustrated by Sallie Anne Glassman. It was accompanied by the Schuelers' book, *The Enochian Tarot – A New System of Divination for a New Age* (St Paul, Minnesota, 1989). The pack has 86 numbered cards, which scarcely resemble the Tarot trumps. Glassman illustrated another Tarot explained by Louis Martinié and Sallie Anne Glassman, *The New Orleans Voodoo Tarot* (Rochester, Vermont, 1992).

[63](#). For a brief biography of McMurtry, see Frater Halayl III^O, 'Hymenaeus Alpha: In Memoriam', *The Equinox*, Vol. III, no. X, March 1986 [issued as a paperback book: York Beach, Maine, 1990], p. 118.

[64](#). The pack was published in '1969-70', according to Jensen 1994, p. 3.

[65](#). For the Thoth Tarot's complicated history of publication, see Jensen 1994.

[66](#). See Sidney Bennett, *Tarot for the Millions*, Los Angeles, 1967, p. 156. She says, 'The cards, whether Tarot or ordinary playing cards, should never be used for monetary gain. To receive personal profit from a reading of the cards is, according to Tarot scholar Wenzell Brown, "to debase the ancient, mystical symbols of the cards".' The quotation from Wenzell Brown appears in his *How to Tell Fortunes with Cards*, New York, 1961, p. 273. Although his text concerns common French-suited cards, most of his illustrations are of Tarots: three of the handpainted cards in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Swiss 'Tarot de Besançon', later marketed by US Games Systems.

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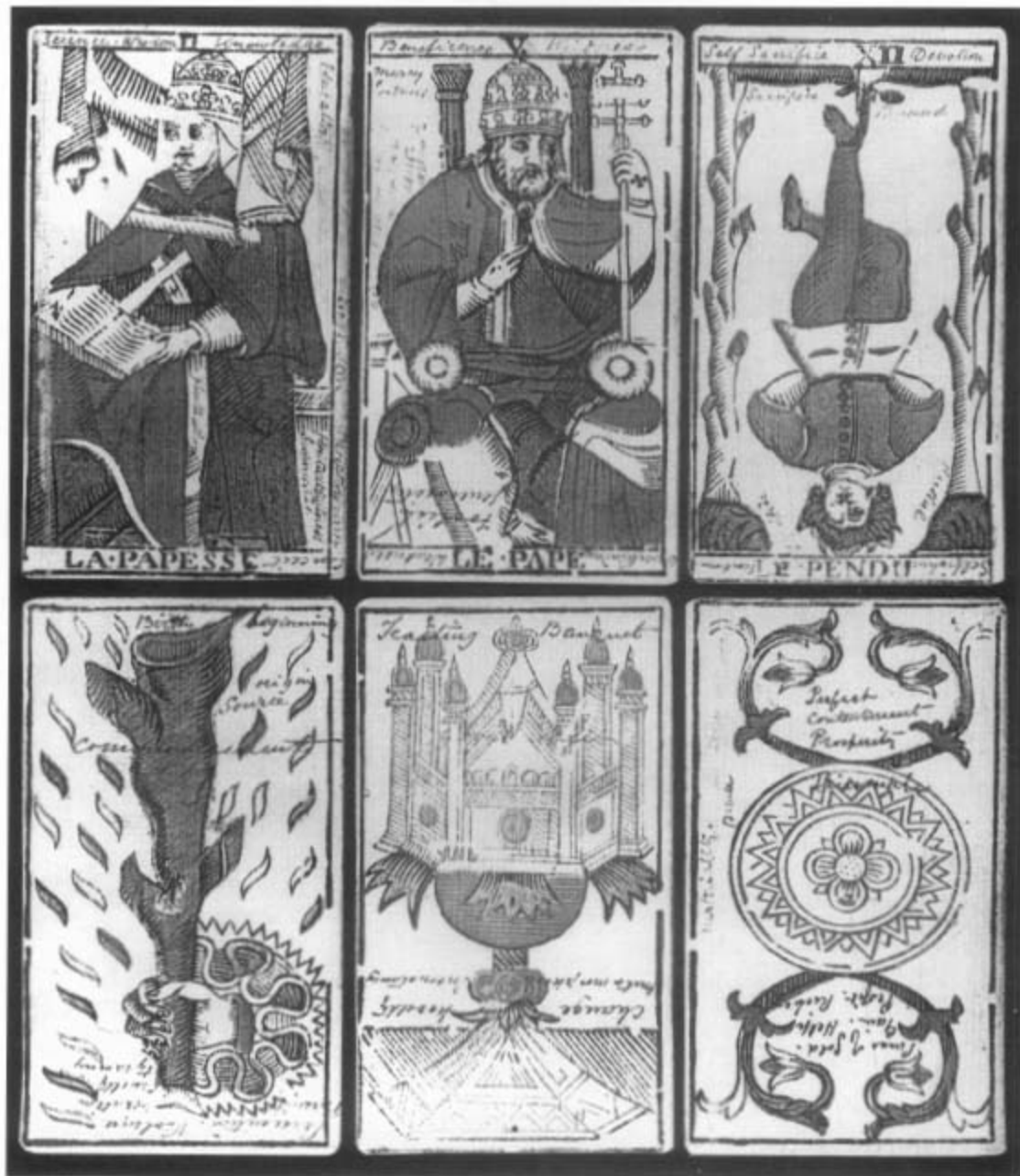
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1. Tarot de Marseille with handwritten notation following Mathers (c. 1890) (Private Collection).



2. Illustrations by Oswald Wirth (1911) (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).



3. Illustrations by Oswald Wirth (1911) (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).



4. Tarutspiel Daityanus by Ernst Kurtzahn (1920) (Private Collection).



5a. Vignettes after Leo Sebastian Humar (originals 1922) (Private Collection).



5b. C. C. Zains's Tarot drawn by G. Beresford (1936) (Private Collection).



5c. Baraja egipcia published by Franco Mora Ruiz (c. 1970) (Private Collection).



6. Knapp/Hall Tarot (1929) (Private Collection).



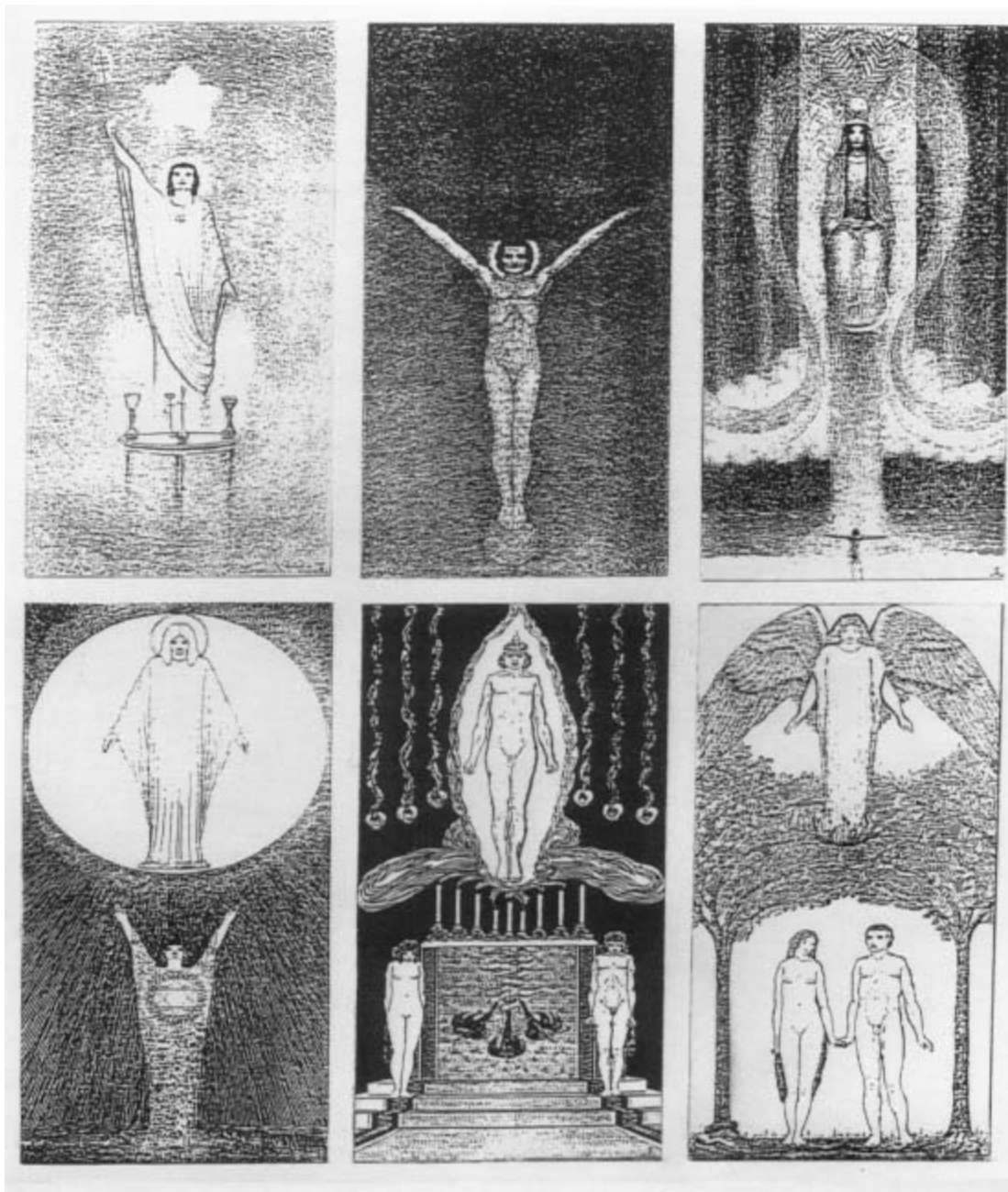
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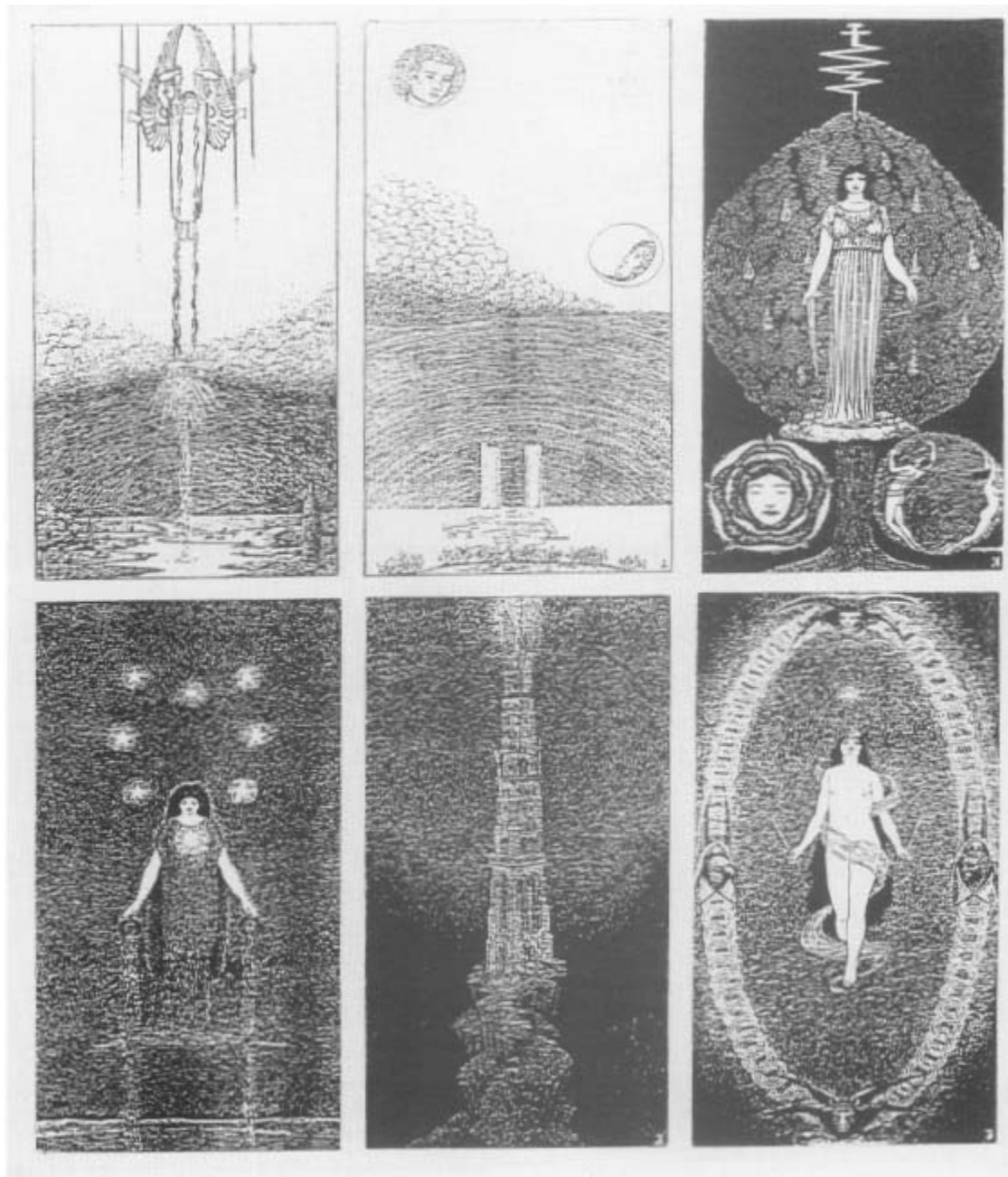
8. *Top row, left to right:* Oswald Wirth's self-portrait (1889) (Private Collection); Paul Case drawn by Jessie Burns Parke (1931) (Private Collection); David Hoy drawn by Dale Phillips (1971) (Private Collection). *Bottom row:* Stuart Kaplan drawn by Domenico Balbi (1975) (Private Collection); Bea Nettles photographed in her Mountain Dream Tarot (1975) (Private Collection).



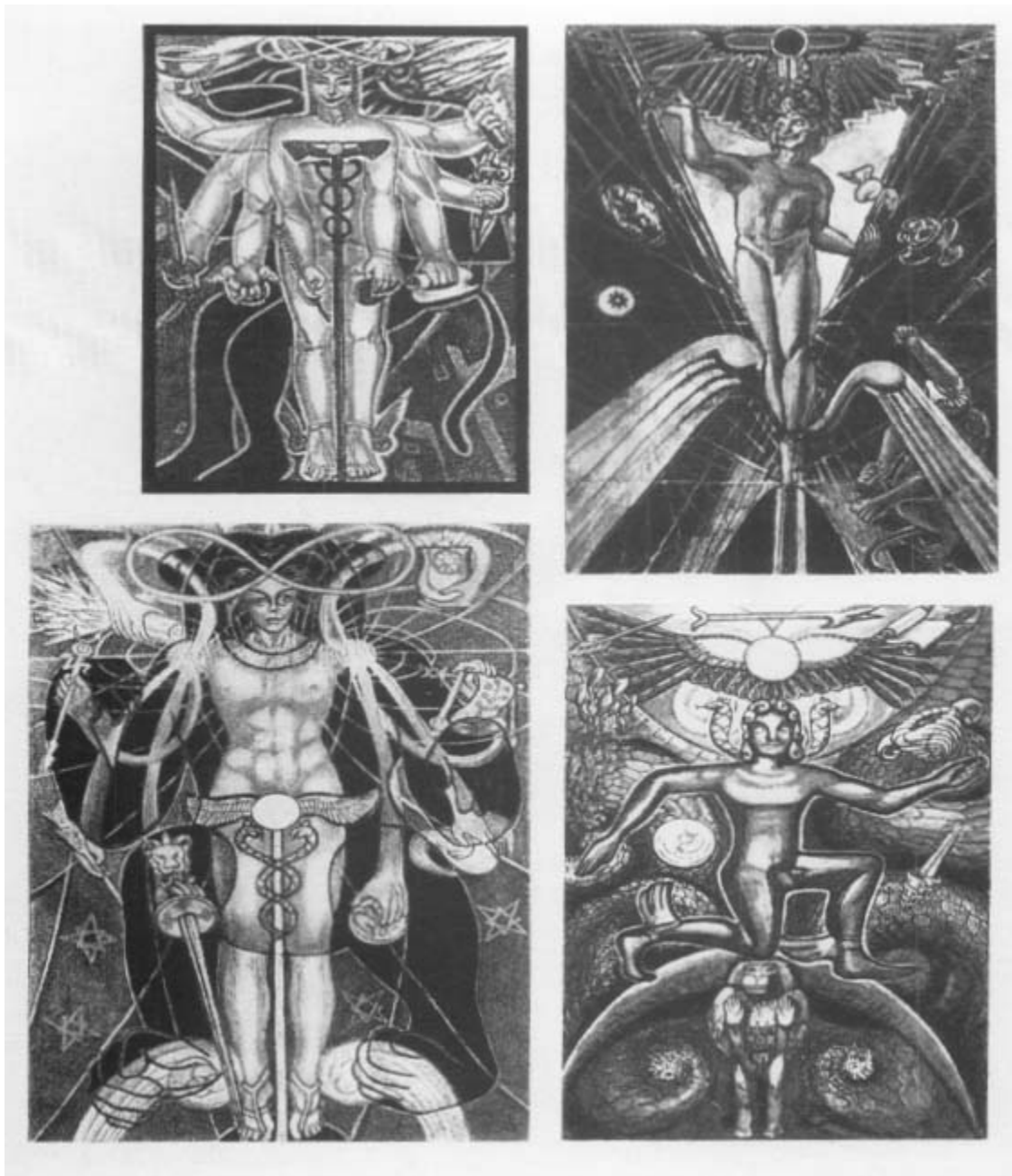
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10. A.E. Waite's second Tarot: originals by J.B. Trinick, 1921–22. *Top*: the Great Symbols of the Tarot (XVI, XVII, XVIII) (Private Collection); *bottom*: the Great Symbols of the Tarot (XXIV, XXV, XXVI) (Private Collection).



11. A.E. Wait's second Tarot: originals by J.B. Trinick, 1921–22. *Top*: the Great Symbols of the Tarot (XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX) (Private Collection); *bottom*: the Great Symbols of the Tarot (XXX, XXXI, XXXII) (Private Collection).



12. Variation on the Magus or Magician for Crowley's Thoth Tarot: originals by Frieda Harris, 1938–1940. *Top row*: 1940 photograph of unused study (Private Collection); 1970 reprint of Thoth Tarot (Private Collection). *Bottom row*: cover for hadlist of 1942 exhibition (Private Collection); extra card packaged with 1986 reprint of Thoth Tarot (Private Collection).